

THE
INCOMPARABLE
CHRIST

CALVIN WEISS LAUFER



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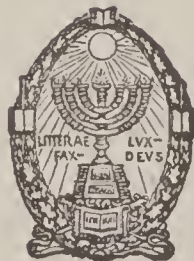
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THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST

BY
CALVIN WEISS LAUFER



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TO
AUGUST KUPKA
COMRADE, COUNSELOR, FRIEND

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PREFACE

THERE is more of Christ in the world to-day than in any previous period of history. In spite of its many failures and excesses, he is the controlling dynamic of modern civilization. He is the spring of its life; and thoughtful men and women, irrespective of race or creed, do him honor. Because Christ is at its center, the remotest circumference of the modern world is moved and swayed by his spirit. Modern culture has a Christian trend because Christ rules within it toward that end. The pages of history are Christian because he inspires, controls, and directs the life which the historian observes and records.

The best possible approach to an appreciation of Jesus Christ is through personal religious experience. The basis of faith in him is in the soul itself, and what we experience there in our relation to a higher order helps us to understand him. The more deeply we live the more incomparable do we find him. If we walk in the light as God gives it, feel its warmth,

heat, and power, we apprehend his transcendent personality and presence, and rejoice in their efficacy, power, and uniqueness. We cannot lose Christ so long as we have thought and felt deeply. Human nature demands such a person as he and hails him with a joyous "My Lord and my God!"

Since science has taught us to believe in the integrity of our religious experiences, we have been drawn to Jesus in increasing numbers. A common experience is the cause of this. What the Saviour saw, heard, and felt in his sublime moments we in a lesser degree have seen, heard, and felt. There is, therefore, an affinity between us and him that compels the acknowledgment of his divinity. We apprehend his deity because now also we are sons of God. To deny Christ is to dishonor ourselves.

Our religious experiences, come they to us out of solitude, or the sanctuary, or from the manifold relations of society, lead unerringly to the recognition of his spiritual leadership and supremacy. Having them, faith is as natural an efflorescence

of the soul as is the phenomenon we witness in the unfolding of a bud into a flower.

With this great principle in mind more than anything else, the following chapters were written. They are now submitted to the reading public in the sincere hope that in nothing may they detract from the beauty of Christ, whose incomparable personality and character are the inspiration of man's undying soul.

Many great hearts have contributed to the completion of this volume. Notable among them are the Rev. A. H. McKinney, D.D., eminent in the sphere of religious education, and the Rev. J. Francis Morgan, Ph.D., prominent in the Synod of New Jersey as pastor and preacher, who read the manuscript and gave valuable suggestions and criticisms. The writer is also greatly indebted to his devoted wife for her sacrifice of many evening hours at the family fireside while the writing of it was in progress. With the prayer and good wishes of these generous souls, the book is laid at the feet of the Christ as a slight expression of faith, gratitude, and devotion.

November, 1914.

C. W. L.

THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST

Like the sun, which sheds its gentle warmth upon the earth and yet remains the sun, clothed in unique beauty, overwhelming force, and raging heat, the least part of which would suffice to consume the life created, so does Jesus appear among his surroundings.—*Bousset, in his "Jesus."*

CHAPTER I

THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST

“His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Such was the Christ of the Messianic dreamer, and such is the Christ of history. In either case he exceeds the power of language to describe. Ordinary formulæ of speech are inadequate and commonplace terms amazingly deficient in the depth, scope, and comprehensiveness that such a nature as his challenges and commands. He is so majestic in personality, sovereign in character, that language, in spite of its versatility and wealth of synonym, is poor in the ascriptions he deserves and we would give. He exhausts the superlative degree. Much of what we feel when we bow before him in reverence, or see when we study his life, or resolve when we come under his influence, must remain unexpressed in the solitude of the deeper self. His towering genius and uniqueness,

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incomparable worth and philanthropy, defy analysis and description.

Moreover, we will have to deal with Jesus Christ. The appeal of his personality and the contagion of his character cannot be ignored without personal loss. Whatever our judgment of him theologically, or estimate of his influence religiously, it would be folly to neglect him. The spiritual nature of man needs such a Person as he is to arouse, quicken, and complete it. If we are at all interested in life and its enrichment, we must be concerned about Jesus Christ, who attained a completeness which is the inspiration of the world. Here is a Person who, according to the testimony of history and the verdict of personal experience, embodies in himself those inscrutable elements of soul which are the perfection of humanity and the fulfillment of its destiny. He is that Son of man in whose presence we know ourselves to be the sons of God.

Our relation to such a Person, therefore, should be very vital and tender. Hoops of steel should bind us to him, and our consecration be one involving indissoluble

ties. If he is what he said, our duty is clear and only one course remains—to follow where he leads and perform what he suggests.

In the effort thus to obey him it is well to remember that nothing can be so authoritative and inspiring as what he has been to man in a living, personal way. Nothing can have more weight and significance than that. Personal experience is the great and compelling argument of ultimate and triumphant faith.

If Christ has done for humanity what no other person could; if he has given it ideals to emulate which are far beyond human device and deceit; if he has fitted it with purposes that cannot be traced in so marked a degree or with such clearness to anyone else; if communion *with* and confidence *in* him contribute to life, health, virtue, righteousness, peace, then he deserves the highest and noblest allegiance.

Now, such allegiance is the product of sincere dealing with the Christ. There is something about him so unique and compelling that obedience and loyalty of the highest order are inevitable. There is a

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majesty to his person that convinces the mind, satisfies the heart, and quickens the will. His abounding greatness and goodness win the assent of the soul and make certain convictions clear and definite to the mind and the heart of man.

First, it becomes very evident that Jesus Christ is beyond our noblest thought of him. Our intellectual gauge of him neither comprehends nor exceeds him. The best and frankest estimate does him scant justice. One may sit down and, in a moment of adoration, pour out his love in song to his character, put into it all the idealism and nobility the heart can command or the brain conceive, or weave into his thought of him threads of gold, figures of light, and symbols of beauty; but when all is done and the delineation is complete, the incomparableness of his personality towers in glorious effulgence above what has been thought and wrought. Before his transcendent character the soul stands confused and ashamed. Its most finished thought of him fails of adequate expression, and its most silvery notes are but echoes of the symphony he is.

That is not our experience with the lives of others. Great as they are, we can account for a Lincoln, a Washington, a Brooks, a Luther, a Saint Francis, or an Augustine, or for John the evangelist, or Isaiah the reformer. These we can comprehend. Indeed, our estimates may exceed them. Man's loftiest picture of Lincoln is greater than he; and Washington, in spite of his gigantic proportions, falls short of the sublimest sonnet that may be written of him. Saint Francis is not as great as one's ideal of a saint. In other words, these persons can be comprised in a biography and satisfactorily explained in a book. We can take their measurements, track the orbit of their life, and know the trend and temper of their thought. Or, conversely, we can overdraw our estimates. Our panegyrics may be too laudatory and our ascriptions exceed the truth. But there is no such peril in describing Christ. He is beyond our best and cannot be classified. He surpasses every known standard and walks alone in the palladium of the mighty. If one thinks of him as a man, he is seemingly like us all, but without a peer; or

as a teacher, he is not unlike some we have known, but without parallel; or a prophet, his visions are like ours, but solitary in their clearness and authority. He is like all others, yet so far above and beyond them, that we do him violence when we identify him even with our best.

When we have done with the utmost praise of him, we are like Angelo, who, having finished his famous painting of the Lord's Supper, sat down and wept. Though he had been careful about his life, and prayed while he worked, kept aloof from the defilement of the world, and disciplined his nature so that his hands might be gentle and facile with divine patience and grace; and though he mixed love with his paint, put soul and passion in his brush, when his task was completed and the face of the Lord stood out in almost divine glory, he withdrew confused. Christ was still beyond his best, and the contrast so apparent that his great soul was subdued.

The transcendence of Jesus Christ is unmistakable and conspicuous in every time and era of Christian history. Nine-

teen hundred years of religious experience acclaim him, but everywhere and always he is beyond the ultimate grasp of the understanding. His is a personality the influence of which laves our life and the refreshing of which we enjoy, but which we cannot any more take in than a child the sea, in the surf of which it wades and plays. And this must be so because he is more than mere man and filled with the fullness of God. Though we were made in the image of God and can apprehend the divine, here is one that rises above us. There are depths and heights in his nature which elude the compass of human knowledge. He embodies in himself what humanity needs to know of God, but there are deeps no mental plummet has sounded yet. He incarnates a humanity that pulsates with the throbbing motion of the Eternal; but that sovereign movement no stethoscope has registered or recorded.

His love, what mortal thought can reach,
What mortal tongue display!
Imagination's utmost stretch
In wonder dies away.

Another startling truth to ponder is the catholicity of his sympathy, the universality of his love.

By blood a Jew, Jesus is in charity a universal. Nineteen centuries of Jewish life flowed through his veins; a past hoary with age and rich in moral achievement beat in his breast; he was a lineal descendant of a nation of saints and prophets, poets and priests, and incarnated in his soul the fiery earnestness of its prophets, the social sympathy of its reformers, the consecration of its saints, the patriotism of its statesmen. He was the embodiment of the Messianic dream of a people which never permitted its identity to be lost in the motley and mobile interchange of races. But in spite of these facts and relations, he was brother to all. In him was no tribal nor provincial vanity. His patriotism was not the cloak of petty intolerance, but the engine of comprehensive benevolence, philanthropy, and brotherhood. True, he was born on Palestinian soil, but at the center of his nature was a cosmopolitan soul. The provincial interests of his people concerned him, but

he was not confined to them. On the contrary, he rendered a ministry native to every clime and indigenous to every people. As a Jew he belonged to the most exclusive of the races; but as the Christ he drew to himself all men by his gifts and graces. He was the first great cosmopolitan of history and embraced in his heart of hearts all lands and people. His love was an unmeasured sea of goodness, the waters of which wash every shore and coastline of human need, and by an endless cycle of spiritual replenishment supply all the expectant hearts and yearning souls of the world.

Such was his public life that he attracted all classes of people. Race, color, creed mattered not. With amazing sympathy he went about doing good and by manifold acts of kindness proved himself to be the Redeemer of man. He was not an alien to any sphere of interest, but part and parcel of it. Wherever he went he beamed on high and low, and in his inimitable way drew great throngs to his heart. Not once in all his ministry did he refuse to respond to a single request that was born

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of sincerity and need. What is even more remarkable, history is a constant record of such saving grace and ministry, so that to-day his universality is conceded and cherished throughout the world.

Behold him now where he comes!
Not the Christ of our subtle creeds,
But the light of our hearts, of our homes,
Of our hopes, our prayers, our needs;
The brother of want and blame,
The lover of women and men,
With a love that puts to shame
All passions of mortal ken.

His sovereign greatness is evidenced by still another fact worthy of note: his presence in the world is the supreme dynamic of character. Wherever he goes, or his influence reaches, or his spirit works, are miracles of life.

In olden times, when he journeyed through Palestine, men and women came to look and listen, and left him marvelously moved and impressed. In his presence there was life in a look. His deep, lustrous eyes revealed hidden depths and evoked latent energies of soul. He had

power to illumine the mind, inspire the heart, enlist the will. His presence worked reversals of character. His was a power that caused people to turn their backs on old habits and sins. The harlot left vice and consecrated herself to virtue. Fishermen left their nets to supply, under the guidance of his matchless spirit, needed moral and social leadership. In response to his appeal, scribes left their scrolls, tax-collectors their booths, lepers their haunts, scholars their schools, to step within the circle of his influence. And then, as they came and followed, he conquered and transformed them, renewed the sources of being, cleansed the channels of life, and filled the hearts of the people with the joy of exultant and triumphant manhood and womanhood.

Such also is the testimony of history. Its pages are one continuous glowing scroll of conquest. Everywhere Christ takes men and women as he find them and converts them into dynamics of social and spiritual power. The courtesan's love he diverts into a channel of sacrifice and philanthropy; the drunkard's thirst, in his hand,

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becomes a passion for righteousness; the grafter's cunning is converted into an engine of benevolence. So wonderful is this that Fairbairn says, "The most remarkable fact in the history of his life is the continuous and ubiquitous activity of his person."

How great his influence is we cannot conceive until we think of the church and its wealth, its social life and missions, its institutions and far-reaching, world-encompassing policies. "Christ," says George A. Gordon, "has once for all fixed the attention of the world upon himself, and henceforth it can never get his divine form out of its vision. He is imprinted forever upon the mental retina of the race, and one must endeavor to look upon the soul, and human society, and God himself, with the eyes that have Christ burned into their substance."

He is everywhere the supreme Lord of life and character. Yes! in the silence of the sky and the depths of the sea, in the solitude of the forest and in the peace of home—everywhere—is felt the marvelous movement of his all-controlling and

ever-living personality. We cannot think of our higher self except through him, nor of God as our Father except through what Christ has taught us, nor of love but through his heart, nor of power except through his sovereignty. He is the molding energy of modern civilization, so diffusive and pervasive, so efficacious and ubiquitous, that we cannot but feel the pulse of his incomparable life surging underneath. His presence is a circle of light in which all things are clear and radiant, and he is the center of a sphere within which is a charity that calms, subdues, and transforms the soul. He is the incomparable Son of man, in whose benignant face we see God and can doubt no more.

Such is the Christ as he stands before humanity—the marvel of eternal love and goodness. He moves us to prayer and tears, he inspires to praise and adoration, he thrills the soul with ecstasies of worship and song. He fills us with a sublime discontent that makes us restless until we have recognized his excellence and declared it to all generations.

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Ye companies of governor-spirits grave,
Bards, and old bringers-down of flaming news
From steep-walled heavens, holy malcontents,
Sweet seers, and stellar visionaries, all
That brood about the skies of poesy,
Full bright ye shine, insuperable stars;
Yet, if a man look hard upon you, none
With total luster blazeth, no, not one
But hath some heinous freckle of the flesh
Upon his shining cheek, not one but winks
His ray, opaqued with intermittent mist
Of defect; yea, you masters all must ask
Some sweet forgiveness, which we leap to give.

.
But thee, but thee, O sovereign seer of time,
But thee, O poet's Poet, wisdom's Tongue,
But thee, O man's best Man, O love's best Love,
O perfect life in perfect labor writ,
O all men's Comrade, Servant, King, or Priest—
What "if" or "yet," what mole, what flaw, what
lapse,
What least defect or shadow of defect,
What rumor, tattled by an enemy,
Of inference loose, what lack of grace
Even in torture's grasp, or sleep's or death's—
O, what amiss may I forgive in thee,
Jesus, good Paragon, thou crystal Christ?

(Sidney Lanier.)

JESUS CHRIST AND THE RELIGIOUS
LIFE OF MAN

CHAPTER II

JESUS CHRIST AND THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF MAN

MAN is by nature religious, and, therefore, everything which inspires the experience of religion is of value to him. It attracts and interests him, and in due course becomes the subject of study, criticism, and philosophy. If after trial and investigation favorable judgment is handed down, he appropriates it, and by its virtue and strength he lives.

Preeminently on that account the world is drawn to Jesus Christ. His life has been subjected to the definitive processes of the intellect and not been found wanting. He has been placed by the side of every known standard and has always measured true. Because of this he is the inspiration of the sublimest emotions and activities of the soul. In him the religious nature of man reaches its summit and humanity comes to flower. He is the incarnation of man's best and,

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therefore, the central spring of his religious life.

Many things in Jesus's life and ministry will be forgotten, but he will always be remembered as the one Person of history who substantiates the religious experience of man. He gives it foundation. By the kind of life he lived, in which he trusted his religious intuitions to the full, he vindicates the spiritual nature of man for all time. Religion is not a mere fantasy; it is an incontrovertible and indestructible fact. It is not a will-o'-the-wisp experience, which comes from nowhere and disappears in nothing. Religion is the eternal fire of the soul, before which no material fact or series of facts can stand. It is not a dreamy substance of a disordered and melancholic imagination; it is the eternal dynamic of sane and healthy life. It has as natural a place in life as thought, feeling, will, and in its noblest activities inspires and glorifies each and all. "Religion is the life of God in the soul of man."

Jesus Christ has prominence in the life of man because he makes this plain and indisputable. He believed in his sonship,

gave scope to his spiritual nature, and lived a life so incomparable in service, sympathy, and sacrifice, that ever since the personal experience of religion is the one thing man cannot doubt, ignore, or discount. The strange promptings, emotions, instincts, and intuitions of the Spirit, seen in the light of his personality, have gained undying prestige and power.

In one of his editorials Dr. Lyman Abbott, renowned for his vision and virility as writer and preacher, refers to the educational method a certain philosopher employed in training an only daughter. He took it upon himself to teach her how to live. "You must," said he, "only believe in facts. Facts alone are wanted in life; plant nothing else and root out everything else." He meant to impress upon her young mind that she must admit only those phenomena for which she can account through the senses. She must believe what she can see, hear, touch, taste, and logically deduce from and by them. All else, though very fascinating, is irrelevant.

His advice was bad, as later events proved. We may as doctrinaires deny the

validity of the religious nature, but as common men and women it will swing and sway us at will. It will not be pushed aside. It is here, and here to stay. Scholars may aim to ignore it, but its bent and trend will continue to be felt in the process of things. It proved so in the case of the philosopher's daughter. Though led to distrust her feelings, intuitions, instincts—or, if you choose, the higher voices of the soul—nature would not down. She discovered that what she was taught to shun were very real and essential. They had much to do with her happiness or unhappiness, unrest or peace, and so moved her to remonstrance. She had the feeling that she was deprived of her best, her humanity, her very self.

When she made her feelings known to her scholarly sire he was greatly surprised and moved. "Some persons," said he, "hold that there is a wisdom of the head and that there is a wisdom of the heart. I had not supposed so; but I mistrust myself now. I had supposed the head sufficient, but I can no more say it. Perhaps, Louisa, you are right."

Louisa was right. There are facts of the soul which, though they are of the substance of which dreams are made, Jesus Christ declared were life and spirit. Their potentiality he never questioned, because he never distrusted the nature from which they sprang. For him man's nature was interpenetrated with the Divine, and spiritual phenomena followed as a matter of course.

Some time ago I spent an afternoon hour with a man of high intellectual attainments and undoubted social prestige. Upon my entering his study he said: "I am glad to see you, though I am not one of you. Perhaps I ought to be, but there are too many things that I cannot explain." His air of frankness and cordiality encouraged conversation and freedom. Together we wandered over the fields of thought, stopping here a little and lingering there a while. He talked, at length, of a great bereavement which took the companion of his life and the mother of his children out of the world. With eyes overflowing, he linked his arm with mine and conducted me from room to room, until we

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came to the open fireplace in the living room. There his voice grew mellow and confident. "Here," said he, "we communed and whiled away the evening hours. And here, when I sit alone, something informs me we shall meet again."

Though many years my senior, I ventured to suggest, "How much those intimations must mean to you!"

Quick as a flash and as bright, came the reply: "They are all things to me now. But for them, I could not endure living here."

His great soul was alive, alert, and final. In that hour the heart had the last word. He was nearer God than he knew; more devout than he dared to admit; and perhaps had more reason to be in the church than out of it. They were the great things of his life, and reacted upon his bereaved heart as holy balm. They are common to us all and operate with authority in our religious experience. Of them Wordsworth says:

But for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise:
For those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,

Fallings from us, vanishings;
 Blank misgivings of a creature
 Moving about in worlds not realized,
 High instincts before which our mortal Nature
 Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:

.

For those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,
 Which be they what they may,
 Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
 Are yet a master light of all our seeing;

.

Hence in a season of calm weather
 Though inland far we be,
 Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel hither
 And see the children sport upon the shore,
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

George Eliot, in the book *Felix Holt*, depicts an interesting character in Esther Lyon, the supposed daughter of a minister. The little parish of Dr. Lyon is in the Scottish hills, where the winters are long, cold, and bitter, and where life has a Puritanic caste. Esther Lyon grew into a womanhood of rare charm and beauty, and rendered that obedience to her father that

culture and grace anticipate. But there were moments, odd moments, and they became more frequent, when her nature revolted against her surroundings. Though she could not understand, the environment in which she lived choked her. She felt cribbed and cabined. Though she loved Bonnie Scotland, her heart ached for the sunny clime of Southern France. Almost ashamed to admit it, France seemed like her native land. At last the secret is out. Exigencies arise when Dr. Lyon must disclose certain matters of the past. She is told that long years ago, when but a babe in her mother's arms, his great heart gave her and her mother a home. Another, and not he, was her father, and the blood of the French nobility flowed in her veins.

Such was her origin, and she knew it not. The chain of events had slipped a link. For years, many years, there was no connection between herself and her past save what she felt. But what she felt was pronounced, and colored all her career. Now, I ask, were her instincts and intuitions and emotions of no value?

Were they intrinsically false, or were they not potentially her very self?

Well! so is it with us in higher relations. Religion is our life. Its intimations of spiritual reality are very prominent at times and make or mar our happiness. Deep down in our hearts we long for other climes, for sunnier climes, with warmer air and purer surroundings and greater freedom. It is Jesus Christ who comes to us and tells us that these things are so, because the Eternal God pulsates in the soul. We are his offspring, and our sense of dependence is only our feeling the need of the Father. We yearn for other realms, because from them we sprang. The sources of humanity are in God, and the declaration of the fact is approved and verified by Jesus Christ.

Naturally, then, humanity is concerned about God. If we are his offspring, who is he?

The query strikes through the conventionality of things to the very root of life with the impact and inexorableness of lightning. It brooks no attenuation, but insists upon immediate judgment. Questions of primogeniture are vital in the

sight of the law, and in religion are final. Thus when Esther Lyon discovered her origin, her next concern was to know who her parents were. Her mother she remembered only faintly, like a vision or dream, like an angel face in the shadow of a cathedral. Hence, the old story runs on and informs us how the aged minister drew Esther to his side and, while she rested her head on his arm, told her all he knew. He recounted the happy years of wedded life that ended only with her father going to war. Loving her deeply, he hesitated often and spoke with trembling lips. At length, however, with deep emotion, he concluded by saying, "He was great and good, but heard of no more." And Esther, gentle Esther, knowing how much it cost, replied, "Then, father, he was like you."

That was enough: he was *great* and *good*. That was all Esther Lyon needed to confirm her own life. And it is all we need to know concerning the Father from whom we sprang. What he is Jesus makes clear. He unravels our life connections and, step by step, leads to the mysterious

origin of things—lifts the veil and shows us the Father. When he does so we are always quite sure that the Father must be like Jesus. God must be like the great and generous heart of the informing Saviour. And to set our hearts at rest, he says, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”

So true is this that if some one should ask us to bow our heads in silent prayer, and some X-ray *camera obscura* could photograph our thought, it would be found that our image of God is none other than the face of Christ. When we say “Our Father,” some picture of Jesus looms on the horizon of the mind and gives our thought of God content and definition. When we think of his love we are reminded of some deed which Jesus wrought. When we contemplate God’s power we do so in the light of some great event in Jesus’s ministry. We know God through Christ. Dr. George A. Gordon epitomizes the matter in this wise: “The greatest thing we know is man; and the greatest man we know is Christ, and for us Christ is the image of the invisible God.”

These facts give us unspeakable confidence in the consummation of things. In a world like ours, with God-endowed souls, and such a God as Christ reveals, the end cannot be remiss. Mankind will come to its own in triumph and peace. The great capacities of our nature will fructify somewhere and somehow. Life is like a river in its course. Though it meanders through vast areas, washing at one place the granite foundations of mountains and ravines, watering in another spacious valleys laden with harvests, flowing past cities black with soot and smoke, and quiet villages happy in their domesticity, at length, with sure and increased volume and momentum, it reaches the great sea. So also with life. The dreams which we have dreamed but could not express, the music we have felt but could not transcribe, the pictures we have imaged in the mind but could not trace on canvas—all we have planned and sought in the fulfillment of the higher life, will be realized in a clime so full and glorious that the sheen of a thousand sunsets cannot compare with it in effulgence and splendor.

These are facts and tendencies of the soul which Jesus understood and vindicated. He brought them into the light, and man has never suffered them to relapse into the dark. He was so safely anchored in them that death had for him no peril nor distraction. He had irrepressible faith that he was not moving toward darkness and defeat. Life for him was not a burrowing through material facts to hell; it was a progress through spiritual phenomena to heaven. While in the flesh he was *en rapport* with God, and between the mind of God and his own, swift and convincing wireless messages were ever passing. To end with the Father was a fit and necessary climax for existence, and the supreme end toward which creation moved.

So we observe the world and its gigantic demonstrations of power; we note the sublime movements of surging tides and rolling floods; in the silent hours of the night we stand and gaze at the moon, the stars, and the aurora borealis; we watch the gorgeous unfolding of the dawn and the receding magnificence of the eventide; we feel the rhythmic swing of things in the

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conflicts and achievements of man; and deep down in our souls we know that Jesus was right, and that God is not far away. The Creator is in his vast creation. He who has made it possible for us to know and in part understand his world is close at hand and lights up the path in which we move. By the joy we have and the peace we feel, by the visions he grants and the ecstasies he inspires, we know that a fairer city awaits our gaze—just beyond the turn of the road.

**JESUS CHRIST'S CONSCIOUSNESS
OF HIMSELF**

CHAPTER III

JESUS CHRIST'S CONSCIOUSNESS OF HIMSELF

WE want to look at Jesus as he saw himself, and, therefore, approach him not as curious onlookers but as sympathetic friends. In the measure that it is possible we will surrender ourselves to him, and, ignoring preconceived ideas and traditional views, let him speak of himself. As he saw himself so would we see him; as he knew himself so would we know him. As he was conscious of himself so would we be conscious of him. It is one thing to speak or write about a person, and it is quite another matter to let him do it himself. We know people outwardly; they know themselves inwardly, and are best prepared to lay bare the emotions, ideas, purposes, and aspirations of their life. It is one thing for us to throw Christ on a screen; it is quite another matter to have him do it himself. What we say *may* or

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may not be important; but his words about himself should be *final*. He is his own best interpreter and biographer.

For several reasons this will be our attitude. In the first place, we are persons who have a vital interest in life and are trying to find ourselves. In a sense we are navigators sailing on a strange sea and are, therefore, unfamiliar with its depths and coastline. Every little while we lift our telescopes to scan the horizon and drop our lines to sound the deeps. What we are and whither we are going are matters of grave concern. Therefore we are studying ourselves and sounding nature, wondering at the mystery of life and the versatility of the intellect, marveling at the fertility of the heart and nobility of the will. We believe that we have a connection with some One greater and better than man, to whose mysterious fullness must be attributed what life we have and enjoy. There are moments when we know thought and feeling to be under the influence of Infinite Reality. "We are," as Sir Oliver Lodge intimates, "connected with another scheme of things, with

something whose full significance lies elsewhere but which touches and interacts with this material universe in a certain way, building its particles into notable configurations for a time, without confounding any physical laws, and then evaporating whence it came." We believe we touch God and are transfused by him, and turn to Jesus Christ because he had perfect knowledge of himself, man, and the Creator.

In the second place, we want to get Jesus's measurements, because of the confidence that knowledge of him inspires in the soul. As the supreme type of humanity, it will stimulate us to see the possibility of our own nature as it is revealed in him. In him we will see ourselves in the light of the highest possibilities of the soul. We will see ourselves in the light of our divine destiny.

In the contemplation of Jesus, one thing deeply impresses us: he knew himself to be in vital connection with God. "I live," said he, "by the Father." "The works that I do, I do not of myself, the Father doeth the works." "The Father loveth

the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth." "I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which sent me." "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father." "I and my Father are one." In the great hour of exigency when he stood by the grave of his friend Lazarus, he said, "Thou hearest me always." And to anxious Philip, yearning for a vision of God, he said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." Such, briefly stated, is Christ's consciousness of himself; and so clear was this relation to his mind that no greater wish could he entertain for us than the blessing expressed in his intercessory prayer, where he says, "I pray that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

The audacity of these words startles and grips the mind. They flash upon us with the conviction that Jesus is above our

humanity. He is unlike us in this, that he need not look for God. Job's cry is not his lament. He is not looking for spiritual fountains and knows not where they are, not for resources of love and knows not where they are concealed. His brow is not furrowed, nor are his shoulders bent, nor his eyes dim by virtue of long and continued seeking after God. He knows God. The mysterious forces of the Godhead are wound around his heart. The roots of his nature are entangled with the Eternal. "The certainty and simple force of his work," says Bousset, "the sunshine, clearness, and freshness of his whole attitude toward life rests upon this foundation." He feels and knows himself penetrated and infused with Divinity. The pulse of the Infinite beats in his humanity.

As such Christ knew himself, and as such the people received him. He lived so supremely that belief in his deity was a natural consequence. The impression of his personality was irresistible. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," said Peter; and when one saw him die, and was struck by his demeanor, he said,

“This is none other but the Son of God.” He lived so regally and exercised such authority over men and events that by instinct people believed him to have power over life and limb. The woman drew near from behind, saying within herself, “If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole.” The centurion said, “Speak the word only, and my son shall be healed.” Nicodemus came seeking the light, because in his heart of hearts he believed him to have come from God. Christ was conscious of being indwelt of God; and what he believed, others conceded and accepted. He knew himself to be in a complete identification with God in his world purpose. “Jesus,” says John Weiss, “thinks no longer of his human personality, but of the divine content whose vessel he is.” He is filled and lighted up with the fullness of God, and he knows it. When the woman at the well speaks about the Messiah and his coming, and rejoices in the hope that then all things will be manifest, Jesus declares himself for all time: “I that speak unto thee am he.”

Another thing that impresses us is that

Jesus was conscious of himself as a fundamental necessity to man. Looking out over the world with its treadmill existence for some, and luxurious ease for others, with its weary paths and somber ways, he said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it abundantly." In other words, Christ was conscious of himself as that Person in God's economy of salvation who had in himself the secret of the ages, and was, as such, the power of God unto that end. So was he impressed with his life and mission that he used every possible metaphor and simile to make his relation clear and known.

✓ Listen to him as he sits and talks to the gathering throngs. How like a breath of heaven are his words as they fall on the multitude! "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." "I am the way, the truth, and

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the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

It is evident that Christ knew himself to be the Messiah—the incarnation of that Personality which was the dream of centuries. He knew this and felt it. Though he never had the egotist's way of saying it, he lived and served as the Messiah. What he said and did was inspired by the thought of himself. "Everything," says Auguste Sabatier, "springs from his filial consciousness as a natural and wonderful efflorescence."

Two things become very clear to him as he watches the development of his Messianic consciousness, and, in his public ministry, he never allowed himself to depart from them. They were: first, man needs to look in the right direction if he would realize his sonship; and, secondly, he needs to live from God-ordained sources.

To meet the first of these conditions, Jesus thought of himself as guide and teacher, and variously declared himself such. When the occasion required it, his words fell with the sharpness and brilliancy of lightning. When, on the other

hand, his auditors were mellowed by prayer and patience, his words were like drops of dew. When the lesson could not be otherwise taught, he rushed upon those in the way with whip and cords. He broke chains of custom and turned over pillars of tradition. In the presence of great wrong he awakened moral life and social responsibility by the assertion of his innate prerogatives. But in the main his prevailing note was a wooing note. Once, when there was a great crowd thronging him, he said, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." And when they were seated about him, he spoke to them about the Father. By the use of images, parables, and paradoxes he got the people to look in the right direction. He showed them God. "He showed them God in his goodness and told them that he directs all. God makes the sun to shine upon the evil and the good; he watches over sparrows; he clothes the lilies of the field; he gives life and food. He notices the work we have to do and the trials we have to bear. He never leaves us to ourselves. His Spirit vivifies and fortifies our own.

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✓ He is at the origin of our life and at the end. We are ever in the Father's hands." Christ's aim was to get people to look away from the sensuous to the spiritual, from dust to divinity. "The duty of man, he considered, was to change his heart rather than to change the order of things." What is needed is new partnerships, and these cannot be formed unless man turns his back on those which have hindered his growth, and joins himself to Him who said, "In me ye are complete." The heart that looks to God grows that way and realizes his fullness.

To encourage man in these sublime matters Jesus lifted man into higher associations. "Ye are my friends," said he, and then added, "I have chosen you." He secures right attitudes in man by assuming correct ones toward man. To this day his invitation and the acceptance of it secure access into the most exclusive and effective fraternity in the universe. In that solidarity the soul attains beatitude.

But Christ felt himself to be the life of man, and, therefore, said, "I came that they might have life, and that they might

have it abundantly.” He felt that people were not living from proper sources. This and that occupation engaged them; this and that form of pleasure and amusement; but everywhere they were always just missing the unsearchable riches that he knew and enjoyed. As he thought of these things and was moved by the tragic scenes that transpired, it became clear that he had come not merely to reveal but also to communicate life to man. He is the life-center of the race—the great oasis in the desert where the great caravans of humanity stop, drink, and live.

In pioneer days people built their houses near springs. So true was this that to-day, when we travel through the land and see the old landmarks, we can always be sure of one thing: there is a spring near by. This is not always true in life's higher relations. We might be rich, but are poor; we might enjoy health, happiness, and peace, but we are in constant anxiety about our resources. These facts Christ took in and pondered. And he learned to know himself as not merely a “revelation of the divine life—he is the divine life.

He is that life brought to the inlets and channels of man's necessity." He gives himself to us. His moral and religious health is communicated. He inspires in man not merely a correct attitude; he bestows the power to make it effectual. He hints at new associations and gives the wherewithal to live there. We are raised to no empty peerage. With the honor comes a living. When Christ raises us to knighthood there comes with that act this draft on the exchange of heaven: "Whatsoever ye ask of the Father in my name, he shall give it you." Our life in Christ is a coronation with a royal income. It is a promotion with adequate equipment and substantial resources. We are lifted into a corporation, the driving power of which is God.

Back of thy parents and grandparents lies
 The great eternal will! That too is thine
 Inheritance—strong, beautiful, divine,
 Sure ever of success for one who tries.

There is no noble height thou canst not climb;
 All triumphs may be thine in Time's futurity,
 If, whatsoever thy fault, thou dost not faint or halt;
 But lean upon the staff of God's security.

Then Christ was conscious of himself as the supreme exemplar of manhood and womanhood. He is not only the giver of life; he is its moral and spiritual goal. He is the alpha and omega of all sovereign life. To be like Christ is the consummation of all rightly directed life. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. As I am in the world, so are ye. The servant is not greater than his Lord." He is the first true man in God's great world, and we are not on the right road of personal attainment unless his piety and compassion, brotherliness and philanthropy, are ever before us and find expression in us. The fight he waged with sin, superstition, and physical suffering of man we are to wage. With him we are to experience God and find him "like a never-failing electric current flowing with quiet and even force through the soul"; and with him are we to enjoy man and see wrapped up in his soul the glory of God. "He," says Sabatier, "was the servant of Jehovah, bearing the sins and miseries of his people, bruised, humiliated, and dying, and aimed to procure

them life and healing." Such is to be our mind and such our purpose. The kind of leadership he supplied his age we are to give our own, and the moral power he exerted we are to duplicate.

Recently a prominent Philadelphia lawyer addressed a men's club in that city. He spoke about boy criminals and the efforts made to reclaim them. With wonderful pathos and dramatic effect he dilated on juvenile courts, until at last, when he had thoroughly aroused his hearers, one of them interjected a question: "What can we do in the matter?" In an instant the lawyer got his clue and replied, "Attend the juvenile courts and become a big brother to one or two of the boys."

The rest we know. Behind the great movement of reclamation are America's noblest men. Boys are realizing themselves through their *big brothers*.

But there is a story, the infinite pathos of which we cannot sound, or fathom, or describe—how one solemn evening, when the cruelest tragedy that the world ever witnessed was being planned, there rose up One to befriend our humanity forever.

“Let not your hearts be troubled.” “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

Through that friendship, we realize our sonship; and when the heavens will be gathered up as a scroll and the earth shall be no more, its kindly ministry will give us abundant entrance to the Father's house.

I've found a Friend; O, such a Friend!

All power to him is given,
To guard me on my onward course,
And bring me safe to heaven;

Eternal glory gleams afar,
To nerve my faint endeavor:
So now to watch, to work, to war;
And then to rest forever.

THE INCARNATION AND ITS
MESSAGE FOR HUMANITY

CHAPTER IV

THE INCARNATION AND ITS MESSAGE FOR HUMANITY

THE world is couched in mystery, but so soon as man is able to comprehend, God discloses what is essential to his life. To keep humanity in the dark and uninformed is not his desire; and, therefore, down through the ages and among all people, he has been making himself and his creation known. God's loving presence is in our midst, and all of us have supreme hours of revelation of which he alone, though we are not aware of it, is the inspiration. On this account the incarnation, which is one of the supreme facts of religious history, concerns us. In the light of it we see how vitally and completely God is identified with humanity. Great mystery that it is, life is illumined by the event, and our thought of it is infinitely enlarged.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ has significance for us because it postulates what we often forget—the greatness of

our nature. That this should have been overlooked is not wholly our fault. The doctrine of the incarnation has been used almost exclusively to establish the deity of Christ, which it does establish without question. The essential greatness of our nature, however, has been overshadowed, not by the event, but by the enthusiasm of religious leaders who have been engaged in expounding the one at the expense of the other. Consequently, man has thought of himself, not in the light of his innate greatness, but in the light of his supposedly ancestral smallness. He is but a worm; but Christ is the Crown Prince of heaven. Man is but dust; Christ is divine. It never occurred to him that the incarnation of Jesus Christ can mean nothing to him if he is not lineally a son of God.

Now, the fact of the matter is the breath of God is in us all, and we are brothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. God breathed into man, and he became a living spirit. Therefore we can apprehend what Jesus is, and measurably know him as the eternal Son who came to save the world.

It is clear, of course, that we can apprehend only what we have faculties to perceive, sense, and know. If we had no eyes, color could not be perceived. If the body had no ear, the world might be full of thunder and music, but we could know neither. If the olfactory nerve had been denied, the earth might abound with honeyed odors and sweet smells, but they would be beyond our ken. Without spiritual instincts and intuitions unseen spiritual reality would be foreign and undiscovered. We can know only what we are prepared to perceive. Because it is of supernatural origin, the soul can know its God.

From earliest time man has been deeply involved in spiritual phenomena. Conscious of himself as spirit, man has been restless to explore things unseen and hidden. With a kind of sixth sense he has been able to scent the presence of another order of life impinging on this. He has felt within himself an affinity that gives him pleasure in communion with unseen reality, and this sense of pleasure he attributes to the fact that his origin must be there. He is happy in the contemplation of the

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celestial, because its marvelous life pulsates in the terrestrial. He is concerned with the divine because that seems to be most truly himself. With the flower that lifts its head above the sod his restless soul looks beyond earth and sky to rest in God. Not in the sensuous but in the spiritual, center the great interests of man.

By virtue of what we are we can know Jesus as the Son of God. A similar sonship has endowed us with faculties by which we can discover and know him. Though life for each of us began in a social compact, we can know Jesus as the Christ, because soul emanated from deity. We too were conceived by the Eternal, by the Holy Ghost brooding over motherhood and breathing into that holy relation once again the breath of life. Thus we became living souls. Our origin is not in matter, though it is involved in the process. There is a fleshly tabernacle, but the life that pulsates within it comes from afar.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.

Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory, do we come
From God, who is our home.

Something of the great God lives and moves in us all, and we can apprehend the Christ because we sprang from the same spiritual source. We discern Jesus Christ because we are kin. He is our Elder Brother, and, although so far removed from us in spiritual stature that he commands reverence and worship, we become aware of him by virtue of a common origin in God.

In thus recognizing Christ we are on the highway of self-knowledge. In the fact of the incarnation man has seen both Christ and himself. The discovery of his divineness involves our own: the faculties capable of taking in such a character must themselves be divine. On this account we welcome the incarnation of Jesus. Because he comes into life with that marvelous fullness of his we become aware of the inestimable greatness and glory of our humanity. He is the Light of Life, which relumes the mystery of the soul

and makes it possible for us, with him, to trace our lineage direct to that time when God made man in his own image and delighted in him. "The coming of Christ," says Dr. Gordon, "means the awakening of humanity to its ideal and divine side. To reject him is equivalent to the expulsion of the divine from human thought and concern. Humanity stands or falls with the acceptance or rejection of Christ, its King."

That is what we mean when Jesus is called the Word. As a word is a symbol of thought and the means of its expression, so he incarnates Deity and humanity. He expresses and declares both; and so luminously effective is his life that, seeing it, we see ourselves in the light of a future pregnant with the possibility of self-realization. As *the Word* he not merely expresses soul but *identity*. To indicate just what I mean, let me illustrate. I recall an incident that occurred in the home of a friend, where the father of the family was aroused one night by footsteps in the hall downstairs. Instantly he bestirred himself, clinched his revolver, and quietly

stole to the head of the stairs and raised his weapon to fire. In that moment a voice said, "Father, it is I." The gun dropped with the suddenness of lightning. Its death-dealing chamber never exploded. A word—just a word—was between death and that home. A *word* broke the stillness of the night, reached the ear of another who was eagerly listening, and instantly recognized his own and said, "Thank God, my son, it is you."

Between the groping race and its destiny is a Word. For centuries prophets, poets, priests, and saints had flashes of insight of a great Messianic deliverer. Some day he would come. The light will shine in the darkness and the shadows flee. He will come to purge the world of ignorance, fear, death, and conduct it to safe anchorage in the heart of God. Jesus Christ came.¶ He lived his life. He walked among men and women, and as he did so people saw in him not only the sublime glory of God, but also the lesser but not dissimilar glory of man. In his perfect humanity, filled with the fullness of God, man saw himself in the white-light of eternal truth.

His coming was the dawn of a new era. Then history began anew, and it will never revert to what it was before. In the evolution of life and progress of events there will be no break or drop or collapse; but in the power and inspiration of the incarnation man will walk "Till traveling days are done."

The happiest thought is still to consider, namely, in the incarnation God takes humanity by the hand and leads it on and upward to safety and fruition.

Christ comes to meet a need, not to be a spectacle; to minister and not to be ministered unto. In him and his devotion man has a vision of that eternal pity which is ever mindful of creation and servant to it. In the incarnation God's love draws near to man to lead him to better, higher, and purer heights of attainment. We are just in the making, therefore he comes to help. Though as a race we are doing great things, and by sheer force of mind and will are subduing the world, we are not yet matured. We are growing, and, in spite of our attainments, cannot see many years ahead, nor are we

always wise in the years we live. The end is not yet: it is still far removed in the future. We are pioneers on the frontier of a better day unborn. Momentous epochs lie before, as eras lie behind. History is eloquent alike of past triumphs and unmistakable wrongs; but the future will be safer and more renowned; for in the incarnation we see God's hand on ours, leading us farther away from sin, error, and extinction. In our struggle against sin, God is for man a faithful ally—the power to combat and renew. As he goes with us through the world, which is emphasized in the incarnation, and by his Holy Spirit breathes upon us, he makes us aware of the potentiality of our souls, and reminds us constantly of the still greater resources in himself. By thus imaging himself in Christ he teaches us that we need not be overcome of evil nor suffer moral defeat. In that event sin gets its deathblow, because man discovers his aboriginal greatness and is endowed with the vigor, passion, and moral purpose of God.

In more relations than we can mention

God has us by the hand. Mainly three concern us now. They are, as Sir Oliver Lodge intimates, birth, marriage, death. These are adventures, "and may," says this man of renown, "turn out surprisingly well or astonishingly ill." We do not always think so. We scarcely think of them as adventures, at least not of birth. But birth is an adventure fraught with sublime possibilities for good or ill. "Our coming into the planet, our becoming individuals and personalities, are great adventures." But deep down in the soul we know God is involved in our existence and is deeply solicitous about our welfare. We are confident that he is behind every new life, and that accounts for the religious nature which it possesses. The presence of our religious capacities and ideas proves that in some inscrutable way we are kin of our heavenly Father. The soul is by nature capable of Christianity, and that explains why Christ alone can satisfy it.

What, then, has the incarnation to say for the birth of every new life? What are we to think when birth and death certificates are constantly passing each

other on the way? What is its message to that important fact which moves and warms us so? There is only one reply, and it is inevitable. God's protecting care encircles every new life. He takes childhood by the hand and nurtures its soul. His attitude is not unlike the Saviour's, and of him we read, "He took little children up in his arms and blessed them." God's hand is on childhood and, therefore, the race is safe.

What, then, about marriage? Few facts give us greater concern than those which have to do with this sacred relation. It is a much abused relation and has been gone into lightly. It has been besmirched with the beast. Unholy alliances have shielded and now shield promiscuous and illicit wrongdoing, and thereby jeopardize birth and childhood. Owing to the superficial conventionalities and incontinence of man, the integrity of the home has been imperiled, and peace and happiness, in many instances, made next to impossible. What of the next generation, if so much of the present is of evil?

Here, also, our peace need not be dis-

turbed unduly. God's interest is as vital and sympathetic as was His who said, "Fill the waterpots to the brim; draw out now, and bear to the ruler of the feast." God's hand is on that sacred relation, and in future years those who in love and honor seek secure and holy firesides will find him faithful. Needed hearts will come together, though as yet they are separated by continents and seas, and their unions will be sealed and blessed by earth and heaven.

What, then, about those strange questions of the soul which harass us on the way to the tomb?

God's hand is there in all its elemental strength. "Why," asks the angel on the resurrection morning, "seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here: he is risen, as he said." God's hand is on the tomb and nothing, however great or mighty, can keep the trustful soul from coming to flower and fruit.

Christ has triumphed, and we conquer
 By his mighty enterprise,
 We with him to life eternal
 By his resurrection rise.

So wherever we look the incarnation gives us confidence. God in Christ is leading us up the world's altar stairs through the darkness into the light, through sin to righteousness, through death to eternal life and freedom.

He guides us through the world
In which we stumble.

In the incarnation is indicated the eternal hope of the believing soul that at length it will attain beatitude in God. It was not made to die nor to be lost. There are things about it—instincts, capacities, ideals, dreams—call them what you will—that crave another career and clime. The verdict of our faith, as of nature, is that the soul will not merely persist, but persist in God. Unlike summer clouds that form in the sky, spring out of the blue and presently disappear, we will never perish. You will be you, and I will be I. It is true there will come a time when the body turns to dust and mixes with the elements, but we will not

Drop head foremost in the jaws of
Vacant nothing and cease to be.

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The eternal God, revealed in Christ, will save his believing offspring, and, after many heartaches and tears, grant full fruition in fairer realms beyond sky and sun, where we shall see him, whom having not seen we love, and in whom we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

**JESUS THE KEY TO GOD'S
CHARACTER**

CHAPTER V

JESUS THE KEY TO GOD'S CHARACTER

IF there is any one thing above another in which thinking men and women are concerned, it is the nature of God. So true is this that the cry of Job, "O, that I knew where I might find him," is universal. From earliest time to this very hour, from the rude abodes of savagery to the secure and splendid precincts of civilization, the preeminent interest of the human soul is its craving for fellowship with unseen, spiritual reality. Succeeding in that, man is content.

No greater injustice could be done humanity than to insinuate that it is no longer concerned about the matter or interested in the struggle to attain beatitude in God. The observation and the experience of the humblest as well as the most erudite concur in this, that in no one, however low and degraded, wise and influential, is absent this persistent reaching out of the soul for God. On the contrary,

we find it in the submerged of the East Side, in criminals behind prison bars, and among the compromising denizens of the Tenderloin. Peasants and artisans, in common with the people and folk of every grade and station, are God-seekers. Man's great thirst is that so notably expressed by an ancient poet, "My soul is athirst for God, for the living God." So true is this now that people will bow the knee to that prophet or poet, philosopher or preacher who can declare him and make him known.

Our age has been characterized as grossly materialistic and refinedly barbarous. Matter, it is said, has gained ascendancy over spirit; business has taken worship and religion captive; might makes right; gold has superseded God. There is truth in all these statements. Conditions are present in our modern life which are extremely revolting and fill the heart with regret, misgiving, and alarm. There are seasons when the golden calf is worshiped with unforgettable license, which gives one the impression that civilization is reverting to those moral and social conditions which

precipitated the great collapses of history. But when so much has been admitted, there is still another side to consider, and it is a wholesome and fruitful one. There is a silvern side to the shield, and its sheen is as genuine as it is beautiful.

There is no gainsaying the fact that there never was a time when everything, from the Bible down to the minutest material force, received such scrutiny and analysis for the sake of substantiating the existence and character of God. Life in all phases and forms has been submitted to every conceivable test and trial. Every great subject of study, whether in the realms of theology and philosophy, science and metaphysics, has been tried and tested in the crucible of thought, to ascertain what it had to say about the Infinite. Said a man of affairs to me recently, "We who are in the whirlpool of commercialism have little to say about religion; but down in our hearts we hunger for it. If there is anything to be said for it, this is the time to speak; we are anxious to hear and learn. God is the food of the soul; give us the true bread of heaven and we

are satisfied.” That acute observation speaks for all of us and expresses precisely what is the common and sovereign hunger of the soul: it is God.

Fortunately for us we may know God. We may know him not as an abstraction or definition merely, or as an argument. We may know God concretely and vitally. It is our privilege to know him as a Person and Friend, and have knowledge of him so positive and complete that we can doubt no more. That perfect knowledge is possible in Christ. He is the key that unlocks the Infinite and brings the Eternal within the scope of our finite minds. In seeing Jesus we know God.

Thus encouraged and inspired, let us observe some of the attributes of God which gain prominence in the person and presence of Jesus Christ. Here is one of them: God’s universal recognition of man. What I mean is illustrated by the service Jesus rendered to a bereaved woman in the time of severe trial. In connection with it, the following sentence is used: “When the Lord *saw* her, he had compassion on her and said, ‘Weep not.’” God

is *sight*. The theologians would call it omniscience. But the simpler term will be more impressive. One attribute of God is his watchful, thoughtful, discerning vision. God sees. God is a seer. His is the kind of sight which looks through nature and us, and takes into his thought every circumstance and condition of our life. God sees with a vision so deep and luminous, kind and solicitous, ubiquitous and penetrating, that in an instant he comprehends sorrow and its loss, misfortune and its privations, sin and its ruin, hope and its prospects, love and its rewards. God sees like that. He sees the endless round of the world and has perfect knowledge of *you* and *me*. God is a seer to whom all things are clear as light and all-encompassing as air. *God's knowledge of us is all-inclusive and all-comprehensive.*

To get at the significance of this conception, let us linger for a moment on the experience of the widow of Nain, to which reference was made. In the miracle wrought at that time we have a clue to a condition. The miracle was possible because Jesus *saw*. "When the Lord *saw* her, he had

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compassion on her, and said unto her, 'Weep not.' ” *Sight* was very important in that day's event. It was the axis on which the wheel of experience moved. How essential it was and still is, let us remind ourselves, that at least four different types of eyes witnessed the funeral procession, yet only one moved its possessor to the work of rescue and benevolence.

One type of eyes were in the head of a person who stopped on the way and *saw* the heavy shroud and overheard the weeping and the crying. He saw the widow and learned possibly that she was mourning the loss of an only son. He saw. He *saw* as many people see and said what many people say under such circumstances: "It cannot be helped; all of us must come to it; what's the use of whining?" There you have the sullen, sometimes acrid, and always comfortless sight of the fatalist.

Another saw the funeral cortege pass. All that his fatalistic neighbor saw he witnessed; but he does not stop there. The mind that looks through his eyes is more exacting and possibly somewhat more practical. He notes how many hired

mourners there are, how much the trappings have cost the sorrowing mother. The prudential philosophy that governs his life gives him a clue to the sad circumstance in which the widowed mother is placed. He *saw*, and feeling a trifle sad, he possibly uttered a groan. "It is hard, but in such a world as this, man's duty is to discipline himself to endure. The best this woman can do is to bear it." There you have the sight of the stoic—cold, inflexible, immobile, cheerless as winter's night.

Still another saw the procession pass. He took in all the tragic elements of that morning's event. The grief of the mother, the evident sadness of her neighbors, the awful loss were eloquent in their appeal. All that he sees and is greatly moved. Tears well up in his hitherto radiant eyes, and he goes on his journey feeling that he can be glad no more, at least not for that day. The story is on his lips, and he tells the neighbors as he goes along. The burden must be on his heart, for he passes it on with feeling and tears. He wishes something might be done; but what, his deeply wrought-up nature fails to suggest.

That is the sight of the warm, ebullient, effervescent sentimentalist.

One more person saw the obsequious throng moving with measured tread down the road to the ancient Greenwood. He observed all that the others saw, but much more. Far beyond the superficial trappings, the empty obsequiousness of the hired mourners, and the heartfelt sorrow of the mother, He saw a home desolate in the village near by, and a garden untilled because the strong man of the house lies cold in death. He looked through the years and saw the poor mother go on her way unattended. He felt the loneliness and the burden which must be hers. He saw even more than that. He saw *in* the procession and *through* it, your grief and mine; he saw years of bitterness, and felt the desolation of broken hearts yet unborn. Behind that day's funeral and the sorrow of a widow, he saw the multiform and ramified sorrow of the world. At the sight, his great heart bled. He *saw* and *drew near* and *laid his hand on* the bier, and felt within himself quivering energies that time and tide could neither measure, exhaust,

nor defeat. In his incomparable love he said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise."

That was the sight of

Immortal Love, forever full,
Forever flowing free;
Forever shared, forever whole,
A never ebbing sea.

Such is God. He may be much more, but he cannot be less. He is *sight*, knowledge, omniscience, so perfect and complete, so personal and universal that he knows and sees with the bewildering certainty and perspicacity of light. Like Jesus, he is aware of our inmost needs and breaks in upon our solitude and desolation with the quiet movement of the dew, and gives us a consciousness of himself that leads us to confess, "Surely God is in this place and we knew it not."

In this experience and Christ's relation to it, as has been partly anticipated, is still another clue to the character of God. God is *sympathy*. God is love sharing sorrow. God is infinite compassion under the burden of humanity. God is a *seer* who *sympathizes*. God's sight is born of

love, and goes forth to commiserate, save, and heal.

Because he loves he sees as he does. Because he loves he draws near and lays his hand on the sore hearts of the world. Through *sympathy*, God's *sight* becomes *oversight*.

Some years ago a strong man in the employ of another was taken sick. After a lingering illness he was called to his reward. His employer, a man of strength and Christlike character, had knowledge of what transpired. He *saw*, stretched out in the future, years of hardship for the widow and her children. They would be for some time in the shadow-land of need and possible privation. He saw. He *saw* and *had compassion*. He saw, and in a mysterious way his *sight* became *oversight*. No item of the funeral expenses came to that fire-side, nor did the physician's fees harass the widowed heart. For months things happened which indicated that some one knew and cared. His was the sight that sympathized and, therefore, served.

That is Godlikeness in man. That is God seeing and sympathizing through man.

Multiply and clarify such qualities until you see in them the glowing fullness of Christ, and then you have a true and just portrait of God. If there be much more to know, God is at least that. God's sympathy is like Christ's—so sensitive that it is aware of us each and all. God's sympathy is like that of the Good Shepherd, who bears us home when we have wandered from the fold. His is the feelingful patience of the physician who never leaves the sick chamber until the battle is won. His is the arm of beguiling tenderness which holds us up in trial and gives us visions of the hereafter looming on the horizon.

God is love; his mercy brightens
All the path in which we rove;
Bliss he wakes and woe he lightens;
God is wisdom, God is love.

E'en the hour that darkest seemeth,
Will his changeless goodness prove;
From the gloom his brightness streameth,
God is wisdom, God is love.

There is nothing new in this for many of us. The story is old and has often been

told. But is this conception of God as operative in its inspiration and influence as it might be? To many people God is still a foreigner. He is removed from the fighting line and not present in the precincts of human strife and struggle. Enveloped with inexpressible splendor and power, he occupies the summits of blessedness and peace. Perhaps he knows, but surely he does not care.

Such is not the God Christ reveals. Let me say it again, first to my own heart and then to you: God is here. He is where his love is—with his children. Where his children gather his presence broods. His presence crowds us now and fills at the same time the remotest niche of existence. He is in the circle of life where we move and live, and breathes upon us his gift of peace. Between him and us there is just a gossamer veil which the eye of faith can pierce and see beyond it his welcome, benignant face!

Then it is often said that God is interested in man, but not *vitally*. God gives us brain and heart and will, and intimates that it is now our business to

find our way through the world. He gives us gifts and hints, but never himself. He does what some fathers do when they send their sons into the world. They furnish them with needed capital and say, "There now, my son, the rest depends on you."

That is not the God of Christ. The God of Jesus takes short steps beside us through the world; he is with us in the yoke of service; he is our solace in sorrow, our friend in trial. Christ reveals a God "of heart and soul that feels sin, infamy, sorrow, and the mistakes of man," and draws near as Jesus did to rescue from wreck and ruin. God is the one Person in the universe full of vital, stimulating, and rescuing sympathy.

Do you want to know the extent of it? Look at Jesus and his cross. There are the length and breadth and depth of it. There is love visualized. There we see to what length God is willing to go to verify and vindicate his love. Follow Jesus to the cross and observe him suffer. See how he goes, submits, dies; and there you have a picture of the infinite sympathy

and adorable patience that woos and saves the world.

God is *salvation*. He is the ultimate goal and eternal abiding place of the soul. He sees, he sympathizes, he saves. God is sight, sympathy, salvation. What Jesus did on that memorable morning God does every morning: he is forever laying his hands on every needy heart. God stands right in the midst of the ruin and wreckage of this sin-cursed world, to retrieve, reclaim, redeem. "Himself takes on our infirmities, and bears our sicknesses." He is afflicted when we are sorely tried and know not what to do nor whither to turn. What pains us moves his heart, so that what Jesus did when he drew near the mourners of old, God does now. He is bringing harmony out of chaos, peace out of confusion, victory out of defeat, righteousness out of social obliquity, life out of death. God is salvation. The destiny of man is involved in that; and God's final purpose is not to scourge and crush, but to bring his children home to the fireside from which they sprang to be forever with him in enduring life and felicity.

THE ATONEMENT

CHAPTER VI

THE ATONEMENT

THE atonement of Jesus Christ is the central fact of the New Testament and, as such, is fundamental to the personal religious life of Christendom. It has priority and precedence in its thought, service, and worship, and determines its theology, liturgy, and government. The Christian's thought of God reflects Calvary; his service is inspired by the sacrifice made there; and his public and private worship is enriched and solemnized by the love there revealed. The tragic death of Jesus has changed the religious history of the world.

Philosophically we can know little about the atonement; experimentally we may enjoy its efficacy to the full. The metaphysics of it we cannot comprehend, for it was conceived in the heart of God. What it has wrought in human life it is our privilege to witness, share, report, and elucidate. As a fact of life it is so sublime that we can no more take it in than

a tub the ocean. But as we are blessed by the illimitable sea, though we cannot comprehend it, and enjoy its surging tides and beneficent air, so are we refreshed and comforted by the grace that flows from Calvary.

We cannot expound the mystery of the atonement: that is hidden in God. Just as it is easier to record what a noble life did than to analyze what it was, so is it here. The benefits wrought for humanity, history can recount; but the atonement itself remains inscrutable. That we shall not explain while in the flesh. Before it we will always be silent and subdued, knowing in our heart of hearts that when we approach the cross we come very near to the bleeding heart of God. When we are able to comprehend him all else will be clear as the day.

The effort has many times been made to theorize and dogmatize about it, and nearly always with the same result. In the effort to explain, the fact has been distorted almost beyond the semblance of truth. It has been divorced from rational insight and obscured by immemorial mis-

understandings. It has been caricatured beyond recognition and made to minister to doubt and unfaith. On that account our aim will be to approach the atonement through the gateway of personal religious experience. It is possible to know the Saviour in the light of his vicarious sacrifice without dissecting either him or it.

We shall avoid, then, finely evolved metaphysical propositions and confine ourselves to what this great event has accomplished for us personally and for mankind in the upward march of the race. That method will do more for us than if we permitted ourselves to wander in the jungle of theology, philosophy, and metaphysics.

Looking at the atonement in this wise, several great facts gain prominence. The first to mention is this: By its efficacy and influence the sinful world and God are coming together. What Christ predicted is taking place. He said that by his death all the world would be drawn back to the bosom of God. He intimated that God and man would be bound to each other with indissoluble ties; and the inspiring fact is that, since the awful tragedy was

enacted on Calvary, the race is slowly but surely finding its way to the Father's heart.

Nineteen centuries of Christian life have come and gone, and to-day man's interest in the God of Christ is as diversified as the race. There has been a change in man's uplook: it is more hopeful and consoling; in his outlook: it is more humane and comprehensive; in his inlook: it is more chaste and ennobling. God means more to the soul and life is more sublimely sweet. The cross has inspired confidence everywhere, and man doubts no more that God is his Friend and Companion. This confidence was begotten by that death the blood marks of which have not yet been washed out of the soil of Palestine.

The event took place in a comparatively small province, but the influence of it is worldwide. It conquered Rome, fascinated and converted the Greek, attracted barbarian hordes on the Rhine, the Volga, the Danube, and the Thames. The aroma of Jesus Christ's sacrifice crossed the Atlantic and, keeping pace with the march of empire, fostered and reared national life in the West. It swept the American

continent and leaped the Pacific, so that Japan, China, India, and Turkestan feel its magic virtue and soul-redeeming power. This is the great miracle of the ages: a man dies in Palestine and by his death bends every knee to God.

Now, if we inquire how this has come about, the answer is not far to seek. It is Christ. The world has seen in Jesus the fair and eternal lineaments of the suffering God. God is like Jesus, and his heart is sympathetic and sacrificial. Though he includes in himself all power, wisdom, and glory, he exercises the same in love. God, like Christ, is eternally involved in the struggle and pain of humankind. He stoops to our low estate to share our life and save us from sin. As Christ linked himself to humanity, God identifies himself with us all. He steps within the circle of our moral leprosy, feels for us, pities us, and in Christ dies for us that by those outstretched arms he may draw us from sin to holiness, from vice to virtue, from fear to faith, from unrest to peace. These are some of the things that have transpired since the day when Pontius

Pilate nailed the threefold inscription over the head of the Crucified. These sublime facts have been made real to us. The atonement has virtue in that it shows us God as the suffering Friend of the world. The cords of his love are wound around us and draw us to his bosom.

How to illustrate the truth so as to bring it to the comprehension of our needy hearts is not easy. Common speech is inadequate and its symbols inapt; but let us risk a venture.

Imagine a case like this: Here is a great business enterprise, which many years of sound principle, economy, industry, conservative method, and honest dealing have created and made notable. Its organization is perfect and its departments thoroughly maintained and equipped. It is managed on the strictest ethical principles, and so carefully carried on that it proceeds like the impressive movements of a symphony. One day, however, it is discovered that some one in the firm has committed a great wrong. By an inadvertence there is discovered, though the figures have been artfully juggled, that there is a shortage

in the funds of the company. There have been misappropriations of the moneys of the firm. The wrongdoing comes to the superintendent of the clerical department with a painful jar. But quietly and with sad heart he steps up to the guilty person and informs him that his peculations are known. "My friend," says he, "you have committed a crime that, if it is not covered at once, will destroy your home, ostracize you socially, and exile you from decency. You have done wrong and the deed will leave its Cain marks on your brow once the law brands you a criminal. Do not forget that. But what makes this offense hard is the fact that my father, the president of this company, who delighted in you from the beginning and by innumerable courtesies and kindnesses made you, is sorely grieved and distressed. But I will say to him that I will help you shoulder the consequences. I will make good where you did wrong, and deny myself conveniences and honors my savings might buy, in order that you may have another chance. You must live this down, and be the man father saw in you as a boy. I am

going to be your friend, and should you ever find the burden hard, remember I am under it too. In the meanwhile you must stay at your desk and live down the wrong you have committed.”

It is a poorly wrought picture, but if the father and the son come together at all in their effort to save the man, it is due to the fact that they are of the same mind. The father yields because he is like the son. The son pleads as he does because the generous sympathies of his father's heart move his soul. There is a common bond between them essentially homogeneous and indivisible. Now, just so is it in the tides of man in their larger relations with God. In the stooping of Christ, in the shameful death and sacrifice, we see the heart of God. God is like Christ, and men and women of every clime are coming into his kingdom of grace, because unspeakable love is tugging at their hearts and will not let them drift.

The atonement, in the second place, turns its terrible light on man's greatest enemy—sin. It reveals its magnitude and

ruin. So strong, steady, sharp is the light that it pours upon it that in sorrow and shame men and women are driven to repentance and to the resolution that it shall taint life no more.

That is a great statement to make, but it is true. On Calvary we see not merely a race under impeachment: the thing is more personal than that! Its white light spots you and me. Ordinarily that is not the experience of man. Sin is never very ignominious unless seen in sharp contrast with righteousness. With many people it has more fascination than righteousness, is more alluring than virtue. The element of hazard and the possibility of escape from evil consequences give it a certain savor and exhilaration. Stolen fruit is sweet. But the spell is broken when it is seen in the light of the cross. How terrible and ruthless is the revelation of its virulence, hate, and ghastliness! Calvary is the climax of sin's violence and ruin. Thither all our malfeasance leads in principle. But contrast is necessary to magnify the peril. To-morrow when you ride in the train, in imagination hold a cross before the daintily

dressed courtesan that sits opposite you. How her picture hat and singularly attractive countenance pale and pall! You cannot do it without tracing through mire and filth the awful course of pollution that her life involves. It is the greater good which the one symbolizes that reveals the imperfection of the other. A sickly face never looks so disconsolate as when it is seen in the presence of the ruddy countenance of health. The disordered brain of an imbecile looms grotesque in the presence of the finely organized head of a Gladstone. Bad life is never more shocking than when it sits by the side of purity. The black cloud is blackest when the setting sun suddenly sends its luminous shafts upon it through rifts in the sky. Bad fruit is most distasteful when you accidentally push your finger into it in a basket of choice pickings. The power of contrast is evident everywhere. See life in the white purity and immaculate character of the suffering Christ; or, if you prefer a different figure of speech, hold the cross between the world *as it is* and what it *ought to be* and God *designed*

it to be, and how terrible and gruesome is the sin that has marred and ravaged it!

Do you ask me why the thoughtful everywhere are more fearful of sin, and why their resolution in fighting it is more formidable? Are you concerned to know why laws are enacted to forestall and punish it? The answer is plain: Man has had a vision of sin, its taint, and labeled it by its true name. The death of Christ is behind man's recoil. Man has seen Jesus go down, hopeless and profoundly lonely, to make his death with malefactors, and has felt the lurid darkness of that day and the terrible loneliness of his soul, and now in deep contrition and shame for past failure turns to combat his ancient enemy, and is resolved, by God's help, that righteousness, love, and truth shall be exalted in himself and in the earth.

So also the atonement has become a world ideal. Its spell and fascination hold in leash the heart and mind of man. The Christ-spirit is pervading the world, and altruism and philanthropy are leavening its life. Humanity is coming forth to shake

off brutedom and barbarism, and resolved to install love and brotherhood in their stead.

Having been lifted up Christ draws all men and women to a common center of consecration and service. The fact that he has befriended the race is sufficient reason why none of us should be enemies. Because we have a common Friend in him we may be and ought to be brethren. And so it has come to pass that the strong man no longer concentrates all his strength on himself; Jesus has shamed him out of it. He has come to see that he is his brother's keeper and bound under God to serve him as such.

At the great religious conference in Chicago, during the Exhibition there, this fact was beautifully illustrated. Attending it were religious leaders of every land. They were alike interested in a common subject. Though they came with diverse prejudices and various points of view, they were one in this: they were all looking up to the same, though variously apprehended, Deity. Many of the men who were responsible for the conference and desired

its success wondered what message or word could unite a throng so diversely constituted. What music could cement their hearts? Great national anthems occurred to the minds of some. But if "Die Wacht am Rhein," "The Marseillaise," or "America" had been suggested, every one would have been inappropriate. The common keynote was not in them. That must be found elsewhere, and it is inspiring to recall that it was found in a great hymn of Christendom. They sang the dying love of Jesus of Nazareth and no one took offense. Though it pictured the Man of Sorrows, the despised and crucified Son of Mary, there was nothing remiss. They rose as one body and with one voice sang verse after verse. Though many years have passed, the volume and majestic sweetness of that day's chorus has not died away. Even now it thrills the soul:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

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Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone;
Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
And behold thee on thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

JESUS AND THE CHILD

CHAPTER VII

JESUS AND THE CHILD

WHEN Jesus said, "Suffer little children to come unto me," a new era in religious education began. When he stooped to embrace and bless them he changed the pedagogics of the world.

In the first place Jesus indicated that the child has a right to the most sacred relations of life and must not be excluded from them. This is fundamental in his attitude and finds eloquent expression in the memorable words which he used to restrain the folly of the disciples when they motioned the mothers and their precious charges aside. He takes his position by the side of the child and for all time challenges the attention and sympathy of man on its behalf. The doors of privilege must ever be open to its approach, for as the bud needs the sun to unfold its beauty, so the child needs the sublimest relations to perfect and mature its nature. It is so richly endowed that it is worthy

of the sunniest days and experiences, and when it is permitted to share them it not only honors but multiplies them.

Jesus conducted his life around this central idea, and by word, precept, and example exhorted men and women to be open, frank, large-hearted, and generous in their attitude toward their children. They are not to be denied access to the light and cheer, glory and idealism of our best hours. They are not to be motioned away because they cannot understand the deep and sublime facts of life. They know more than we are willing to admit, and should always be greeted with the open, lustrous eyes of gentleness and love. When our arms are extended to receive them our spirits should be chastened by pure and holy association. The countenance that answers their anxious faces ought to be cordial with invitation, and the hand that guides them generous in touch and hold. If ever we can command sunlight its gleams should shine forth when children stand in our midst.

The common sense of the domestic circle may serve us in this matter. How

often when children are about we counsel each other that care be exercised in what we say and do! We use words that convey deeper lessons and truths than we are ready to allow or practice. "Little pitchers have big ears." "Small fish have large eyes." "A small sponge may not comprehend the sea, but it sucks in all that it can hold." With these saws and adages we counsel each other, yet fail to grasp their deeper meaning; for the next moment either the voice of conversation ceases or the nurse takes the children upstairs. In conversation we counsel each other, in practice contradict each other, and incidentally deprive children of their just rights and privileges.

Now, the way to get an oak out of an acorn is not by ignoring the nut. That would be insane. The thing to do is to study the acorn, couched as it is with internal forces which seek emancipation, and give it the environment that its nature anticipates and suggests. Given that, the sun and showers will do the rest. Because a boy is a mannikin should make us stand at attention. Perhaps to-morrow

he may be a giant, and it is a matter of grave concern how he uses his arms and limbs.

To-day the boy holds a rattle, but to-morrow he is the big man of battle. Just now he charges with fearful mischief upon paper soldiers and improvised ramparts; but to-morrow he may be that commander-in-chief at whose stentorian command great armies fight to death the enemies of the land. It is important, therefore, to look after the prince in order that the king may be saved.

Christ's example needs to be preached from the housetops; for, as Ernest K. Coulter, Clerk of the Children's Court of New York County, says: "The recognition of even the most fundamental of the child's rights is a slow process. . . . Being the weakest member of the community, the child is the last to come into his own." That being so and much more that might be charged to our shame and sorrow, let us write anew over our hearthstones the memorable words of Jesus, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."

The child, therefore, should be welcome to the best hours that God permits and sends us, not that it may be crowded with theological ideas and religious history, but that it may see, feel, and share the wondrous world in which father and mother live. "It is enough," says Dr. Martineau, "if it but sees the parents bend with silent awe, or hears them speak as if they were children too, before a holier still: this will carry on the ideal gradation of reverence and show the filmy deep where the steps ascend the skies." To create and maintain such an environment requires a high order of spiritual excellence; and in this, as in many other things, we need the broad, liberal, genuine piety of Christ. "His piety," says Martineau, "brings together the characteristic affection of different periods of life and keeps fresh the beauty of them all; it puts us back to whatever is blessed in childhood without abating one glory of our manhood; upon the embers of age it kindles once more the early fires of life, to send their genial glow through the evening chamber of the soul and shine with playful and mellowed

light through its darkened windows—brightest sign of a cheerful home to the passer-by in storm and rain.” Such is the atmosphere the child needs, and when it is provided its destiny is assured.

In the second place Jesus indicated the *direction* child nurture should take. He made room for children and said, “Let them *come to me*.” *He drew them to himself* and blessed them.

Here is a principle that conditions not only healthy life but also its development and education. There must be some definite end in mind if life is to reach an honorable goal. This fact all the great teachers of the world appreciated. It gave distinctiveness to their life and work. For Buddha life is the suppression of the self. Plato does not think so at all: for him it consists in the vision of eternal ideas. The exercise of the reason is for Aristotle the highest ecstasy possible to the soul. Epicurus sees pleasure as the thing to be desired. For Goethe, the “highest good” is devotion to the well-being of humanity, and its distinctive marks are sacrifice, charity, and heroism. Kant makes

it to consist in good will. Jesus is no exception to this rule. He too sees clearly in his own eye what should be the end of human progress. "He declared," says Dr. Brumbaugh, "that the end of the education of the human soul is to fit it to live in harmony with the will of God." The end of Christian culture is Christian character.

The aim of our educational processes, therefore, should be toward Christ. In the development of its religious nature every side of the child will be perfected and blessed. In realizing itself as a child of God it will secure creditable place, prominence, usefulness, and influence everywhere in the social order. The attainment of virile Christian character carries with it the promise and guarantee of beatitude everywhere.

So strongly has Christ impressed thoughtful men and women with this fact that many believe if the child is properly nurtured and trained no risk need be taken as to the future of man. "Take care of the children," says Nolan R. Best, our distinguished American journalist, "and the

world will take care of itself. The nation which looks most diligently to the welfare of childhood will cap the climax of history." Proper tutelage the first seven years of the child's life will determine its character and destiny. The Jesuits have tenaciously held to this doctrine for centuries, and by faithfully practicing it have strengthened and enriched the influence of Catholicism. The success of Protestantism is less extensive, because this truth is either foreign to its adherents or neglected by them. It therefore needs restatement and emphasis. People must be led to see what is very clear to one of New York city's great clergymen. He says: "You can teach botany in your class, but your teaching is a failure if your botany does not lead to the Rose of Sharon. So there are great and inspiring lessons in geology, but what matters our learning if we fail to acquaint children with the Rock of Ages? In history are many great names, illustrious for gallant deeds and beneficent service, but how futile the knowledge of them if, after all our pains, they cherish not the Name that is above every name."

In developing, for instance, the feeling of home in the child, no fireside is so good as one's own. Close by the place where father and mother sit should be the wicker basket in which baby sleeps. It cannot understand why the flames leap up the chimney, nor account for the harmony in the voice of conversation, but, in the meanwhile, the light and music of that sacred place pacify and ennoble it. The atmosphere and temper of the home soak into its being.

It is so in the matter of health. Discipline children toward that end, let them live in the sun and open fields, inhale the air laden with honeyed fragrance of clover and mint, permit them to wade the brook in the meadow and hear the robin's call in the trees; let them be moved and touched by the sincerity and strength of nature, and by degrees its health becomes their own. The flavor of God's out-of-doors is on their clothes and the savor of its beauty in their hearts.

So also is it in religion. By nature the child is prepared to be impressed by the mysterious. Reverence and compassion are

the glory of childhood. By the first it is docile and humble, and by the second it is frank and free. By the instinct of reverence there are times when, in the presence of mystery, its eyes are all soul and its heart is full of worship. So great is the appeal of its nature in those hours that its body quivers with intensity of purpose, gracious feeling, chaste and subduing piety. In such moments to be loved by a child is to be caressed by heaven.

This nature of the child it is our privilege to mold and educate. "To educate it is not," says Dr. Lyman Abbott, "to make the child over; it is to help him grow." Therefore, he needs Christ. He needs Christ because a nature so richly endowed deserves to grow into the best and noblest life we know. He needs Christ, also, because his sympathy is like that of the gardener, who touches the bulbs and looses the leaves and petals of his plants, purges the stalk, and produces that ideal of loveliness, the American Beauty rose. The Christ-touch works miracles in child nurture. His touch is life and his blessing destiny.

Again, Christ makes it very clear that the proper culture of childhood is service rendered to him. By saving the children we save men and women. But has it ever occurred to us that by saving the children we secure Christ to our humanity? "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me." In bringing our children to Christ, we bring Christ to ourselves. When he lays his hand on a babe's head, he touches mother's heart. He blesses it and her. In taking it to him she brings him to herself.

When Leonidas, the father of Origen, kneeled beside his son, he felt him to be filled with the Holy Ghost and consecrated him to the church. The consecration of his son to that end did not impoverish the home—that too was filled with the Divine. Great was the joy when, in answer to prayer, Samuel was born into the home of Hannah and Elkanah. It was as though trailing clouds of heaven overshadowed them and their poor little home had been made a suburb of paradise. But the sublimest hour in their happiness came on the day when Samuel

was lent to the Lord. Then joy merged into thanksgiving, happiness was converted into ecstasy; then poverty inherited the glory of heaven and the fullness of the earth

Parents bring their children to the baptismal font and there consecrate their children to God, and God meets them more than half way, for when they reach home again, lo! he stands benignant by the trundle-bed! The child was held up for his touch and he came and relumed the fireside.

So in a larger sense Christ has been saved to man through the proper culture of childhood. It is commonplace that the children of to-day are the citizens of to-morrow. Therefore, we are not at all surprised to learn that the very children Christ touched on that memorable day, in later years, when persecution was rife and men and women were driven to and fro, sheltered the refugees and exiles of the church. Once they were children and the disciples motioned them away; now they were matured in their manhood and womanhood and hospitably received those who

came in the name of Christ. Once they were so small that Christ had to lift them; now, through his grace, they have become strong to hold Christ in the personnel of the church. The hint is clear and convincing: we can keep Christ in our humanity if we consecrate our children to him.

O may this example of the incomparable Christ inspire us to woo our loved ones to him while their lives are young and clean! While they are the inspiration and comfort of our homes and hearts let us bring them to him for his blessing, protection, and salvation.

He'll lead them to the heavenly streams,
Where living waters flow;
And guide them to the fruitful fields,
Where trees of knowledge grow.

The feeblest lamb amidst the flock
Shall be its Shepherd's care;
While folded in the Saviour's arms,
'Tis safe from every snare.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE CASTAWAY

CHAPTER VIII

JESUS CHRIST AND THE CASTAWAY

To enter into an appreciation of Jesus and his career, it is important to recall the times in which he lived, the despair of the people which he had to encounter, and the obstacles which he had to overcome. Rome was in power and nearly half of its population in slavery. The provinces which it had subjugated and assimilated into its imperial life were at its mercy and under tribute. Its system of taxation was the worst human ingenuity could devise and avarice enforce. Though not entirely absent from the minds of its sages and poets, equal rights and popular education were unknown. Law was an instrument of oppression; taxation a form of robbery; liberty another name for license and lawlessness. Under such a regime the rich were very rich and unmistakably immoral; the poor very poor and therefore bitter and despondent. The middle class of respectability was small but hoping

against hope for a deliverer to lead them into the Canaan of freedom where slavery would be abolished, the peasant population enfranchised, wealth more equally distributed, womanhood exalted, and domestic happiness be sustained by an atmosphere of virtue and love.

The period was ominous with social misunderstandings and the common people were not considered much. They were the world's castaways. They belonged to the world's rubbish pile. They knew it, and so did the Saviour.

But the important thing to remember these days is that the common people saw in Jesus a new type of man. He was different from the rest and they intrusted their lives to his care. He was their champion, and in his great heart they found the leadership they longed for and welcomed.

They were correct in their estimate of him and justified in their devotion to him. Twenty centuries of life recognize and honor him. His imperial greatness is the table talk of the hour. There is in him a height of love that surpasses the best

we know; a depth that enspheres the lowest; a breadth that embraces the remotest clime. There is really nothing more stimulating about Jesus than the exquisite solicitude he had for the castaway, the unfortunate, the social bankrupt. Toward them he was always very tender and sympathetic. Others might consign them to the scrapheap of the world's dumpage; but not he. No matter how unfortunate their condition among the submerged and lost, his love went out to rescue and reclaim.

This is important for us to know, for there are times when we scarcely know what to do with the castaway. Manifestly something must be done, for we are not irresponsible. The world's castaways are sometimes our kin and have brought great reproach upon the home and family honor. They have disturbed and outraged civilization and its complicated machinery. They constitute a social problem which has been variously met. The Jews were contemptuous toward them, and had little, if any, mercy. The Roman made the castaway his slave and the Greek made him his tool. Down through the ages he has

been whipped and jailed, exiled and hanged. He has been driven into the serried ranks of battle and forced to settle the quarrels of nations. He has been the victim of the mailed hand of justice and been treated as though through his wrongdoing he had forfeited all claim to compassion.

Sir Walter Scott gives us a classic picture in *David Deans*. To him is brought the information that a daughter of his has turned from the path of virtue. The rugged lines of his saintly face stand out in anguish, and he hopes that there must be some mistake. But when he is convinced dark anger sits on his brow and at last he agonizingly says: "She went out from us because she was not of us; let her gang her gait. The Lord knows she was the bairn of prayer and may not prove a castaway." That is the mood of many, "She has gone out, let her alone." It is also the mood of a certain type of philosophy which "loves humanity but hates the individual." In every time and place man has been juggling with this problem, and, in the meanwhile, the castaway has had poor hope of salvation.

But there can be no mistake about Jesus' attitude. He championed the rights of the forlorn and lost. He had a definite policy of reclamation and was never idle in the prosecution of it. He was resolutely engaged in restoring the lost wanderers of the world. For the one that was lost his eyes were alert, his ears open, his heart unlocked. He came to insist that every man, however high or low, rich or poor—not the favored few, but all—should be redeemed and saved by all-encompassing and remedial love.

Jesus cared for the castaway because he appreciated the possibility of his nature and profoundly believed it would respond to the touch of nobility and virtue. The lost prodigal may yet become the favored son of the fold.

It is strange to observe that the world is just awaking to this principle, and recognizing the value of the world's dumpage. Peter Cooper amassed wealth by converting scrapheaps into dollars; and it is significant to-day that in every thickly inhabited district are men and women who pay large prices for the privileges to trim scows and

sort refuse. The world's cinder heaps are turned into revenue. There is wealth in the castoffs of civilization.

To associate fallen men and women in this way is almost sacrilegious. But no offense need be taken, for castoffs and castaways are entities the virtues of which have not yet been discovered. The cast-away has value, but is covered by the rubbish of worldliness and sin. Jesus understood that fully, and consequently took his stand in the midst of the rubbish pile, and by the tremendous appeal and solicitude of love emphasized its value. In him the castaway has a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Though he walked amid dark passions and the evils that grew out of them; saw the ignominy of men and women, and witnessed the terrible consequences that followed; though he felt the disdain, treachery, malignant designs of his enemies; though he observed the artifice and pretensions of the vain and strong, nothing ever dissuaded him from his confidence in the eternal possibilities of the lowest and most vile. "Look where we may," says Dr.

Martineau, "it is clear that resentment has not the faintest share in Christ's feelings toward wrong." He sees its blindness, appalling darkness, and fearful degradation; but ever and always his pure eyes gaze into the most turbid hiding places of sin and detect the possibility of another and better life. He is disappointed with the aberration of the castaway, but hopeful as to the good he may yet achieve.

Jesus was patient with the castaway because he knew that many of his failures and faults were due to his life connections. He was aware, as none of us are, how many lives are tainted by the ungodly living of their progenitors. They came into the world with certain biases of nature latent in fiber and blood, which in later years, if not restrained, precipitate moral obliquity and social ruin. Severe as he was in his moral ideals, Jesus could never say what David Deans said, "She has gone out from us, because she is not one of us." He felt that humanity was implicated and socially accountable for the failure of the lowest. Though he was sinless and never under moral impeach-

ment, he felt that the iniquities and frailties of men involved him. Moreover, he knew that the life which goes down and fails is so inextricably interrelated and connected with us that, in its going and failure, it must take something of us with it. It goes out and fails, but perhaps the blame should be placed on the one who remained at home. Of this we are positive, there have been instances where the vices of one generation were but the cravings of an earlier one. They came to flower in the one, but were sown in another.

If science is severe about anything, it is about this. It traces connections with fearful and embarrassing exactness. It follows weakness back through the years and lays its fingers on deflections and escapades of earlier years. It deals with cases where judgment should have been administered on men and women who were buried in honor. It insists that misery is largely caused by humanity's outrage of humanity. To-day's pain is due to yesterday's indiscretion. The present generation is born with a certain moral bias, cramped mind, darkened spirit, be-

cause a former one was not true to itself and its God.

Several years ago a mother of some prominence socially called upon the rector of a prominent church in a large city to plead for a son whose habits were the occasion of grave concern. She pleaded as only a mother can that he use his influence to save him. She protested that God was unjust to thus afflict her. She did not deserve it; it was unpardonably cruel and unjust of him to permit it.

The good man listened with grave interest and when she had finished he counseled patience. When she wondered why such a course should be pursued he turned to a private parish record in which was the history of every member of his church for a period of thirty years. Drawing from it a card he said, "First, we must, if possible, acquit God; secondly, we must find our duty in this deplorable matter." Then looking at his record and examining it carefully, a dreamy look came over his face. At length he said: "My good woman, here in these days twenty years ago, your religious life gave me grave concern. Do

not be hard on your son; what he is now, you were then. Possibly you have given him a bias toward the present course; and, therefore, you must follow him in love. Be gentle, firm, patient, prayerful, and forgiving."

O, for the vision of the Saviour who took in these deep-seated wrongs of the race and went out as the Good Shepherd to befriend the lost and fallen of the desert and brought them home! His example indicates our responsibility and duty.

Again, Jesus is the Friend of the cast-away because the peace of God's moral world is involved. The joy of the Father's heart is not complete so long as the cast-away wanders in sin.

This morning in playing a familiar hymn, you discovered that the alto D-string of your piano was out of tune. One string out of eighty-eight was not in accord with the rest. Just one! Yet that one string broke the harmony of the whole. You thought you could avoid it; but it had a mischievous way of making itself heard. Unconsciously, automatically, you struck it. The great hymn of the church, with its

wonderful progression of chords, was broken. Just where the climax was intended by the composer and where the soul was to see and feel God, the D-string sounded—and it was false! The vast vision of the composer was blasted and its glory departed.

What is to be done with the D-string? Have it tuned. Get it in accord with the rest. So let it be with the world's cast-away, the poor wandering sheep that breaks the harmony of the world. Love him into accord with God and life and things. Go out into the highways and hedges and bring him home; so will the music of the world swell forth again in unbroken cadences of thanksgiving.

The overflowing love of Jesus is exquisite in its method of reclamation, as is seen by his parable of the "Good Shepherd," which is vitally related to this theme.

Love *seeks* the lost. It goes out into the night and over the path and the by-paths of the day's grazing. It looks for the place of fascination and temptation, and for the precipice over which the sheep

may have stumbled. It examines in the dim light twigs and brush, looks underneath willows and rushes for some trace of the wayward feet. It is all eyes and ears. Like a hound it scents the air; like the eagle it penetrates the lowest deeps. But it persists until at length, far removed among the underbrush and in the mire, the stray sheep is found.

Love *bears* home. O rare touch of genius! "He bears it on His shoulder." Folly and weakness on the mighty shoulder of love—think of it! How different has our treatment of the lost sheep been! We have seen it treated otherwise. I have seen fallen men and women lashed by laws and penalties; and so have you. I have seen them whipped into line by the lash of necessity, when love alone could possibly have helped. Such is not the Christ-spirit, nor Christ. He takes up the castaway and his sin; he bears the sickness and the patient, and so says to a startled and supercritical world, "Thus shall my lost sheep have another right to the fold."

"*Bears it rejoicing.*" Christ's method of

love is an ascending scale of warmth, passion, music. His is the sympathy which sings while it serves, hums a lullaby of home as he journeys in the dark with his precious bundle on his back. His is the love that covers the crying of regret and shame with music and heart's ease. Around the weeping, sobbing sinner he weaves a song of jubilant praise.

Such is Christ's method of reclamation, and the parable is autobiographical. The shepherd is none other than the Good Shepherd, sent by God to seek and save the lost. What the parable says, Jesus is; what it portrays in picture, he embodies in person. In a larger sense it is also the key to the very constitution of things. The cosmic order is redemptive: God's love is at work there. Whatever people may think, or, in their sin and folly, continue to do, they have commerce with a Redeemer whose solicitude they must combat at every turn of the road. Everywhere in life they have to do with a stupendous *crusade of love*, which seeks the lost hearts and moral shipwrecks of the world. They have to

do with a Saviour the benevolence of whose ministry bears them up, and, if they cease to oppose, carries them home to honor and righteousness. The eye of the Saviour is on the world's bankrupts; infinite love is seeking them; omnipotent strength is prepared to reclaim them. The very universe is bound up in an eternal crusade of redemption.

These are the "good tidings of great joy," the clarion resonance of which still rejoices the heart. We have to do with a Saviour who cares, and whose love is such that, though we may run wild and lose our way, will not forget nor let us go. He misses us in his stupendous plans. His joy is not complete until, after repeated trials, tests, and infinite sadness, his mighty arms draw us to his heart and give us safe anchorage in his perfect peace.

That is the gospel, as it comes sweepingly direct from the heart of God. The love it proclaims is so personal and individual that the experience of it is as supremely real as the one described by Mrs. Browning in "A Child's Thought of God":

I feel that his embrace
 Slides down by thrills, through all things made,
 Through sight and sound of every place:
 As if my tender mother laid
 On my shut lids her kisses' pressure,
 Half-waking me at night; and said,
 "Who kissed you through the dark, dear guesser?"

It is thus very evident that Jesus must forever be the great exemplar of the race, and the imitation of Jesus, the great ultimate duty of man. What he was we are to be in life and service. His conscience and sense of responsibility, his vision and virility must determine our occupations and professions, our holidays as well as our holy days. So long as the castaway hampers the progress, disturbs the peace, disrupts the unity of the world it is our duty to *go back* and *reach back*, *stoop down* and *lift up*. Peradventure we may save some from sin and ruin.

This great ministry should begin at our firesides, but not end there. Every vacant chair at family prayers should be an interrogation point—and a period. Involved in its mission must be all other relations, whether individual, social, communal, na-

tional, or international. It includes the prodigal of Christendom and the benighted pagan of heathendom. It embraces our native town and the remotest hamlet of Mongolia. To be like Jesus is to ensphere the world with love; to serve like Jesus is to be as cosmopolitan in sacrifice; to live like Jesus is to be as genuine, intelligent, and thoroughgoing in love as was he. To express his life and mediate his influence, we must accept his leadership, belt our lives to his strength, incarnate his spirit, and prosecute his purpose, in the ramified and diversified concerns of humanity.

Such is the appeal of his life, and honest men and women dare not ignore it. It comes to you, it comes to me with the impact and inexorableness of authority. "The consciousness of Christ," says Dr. George A. Gordon, "is the highest known to mankind; the soul of Jesus and its content Godward and manward is without a rival; his vision and his love are first, and beside him there is no other. I cannot conceive of a nobler calling or a worthier task than that which seeks to master some-

thing of the vision and love of Christ that it may make them the vision and the love of mankind." This kind of consecration is what the world is waiting for and expects. It is the consecration which has the mind and the heart of Christ and goes forth to serve and sacrifice, in the hope that the least and obscurest in God's world may be attracted to higher and sublimer levels of life and character.

As I apprehend it, we too must lay down our lives and pour out our souls until, after repeated setbacks and privations, the tally sheet of the fold registers the fact that all are safely gathered in and not one is lost.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE CROWD

CHAPTER IX

JESUS CHRIST AND THE CROWD

JESUS CHRIST is the first great Person of history who saw the crowd in self-sacrificing love; the first Leader of renown who did not use his influence to exploit it, but willingly sacrificed himself on its behalf. Tremendous hold that he had on the populace, swaying it by the magic of his ideas, the simplicity of his character, the purity of his motives, he asked nothing for himself. He did not ingratiate himself with people to gain friends, and, having gained them, use them for his own advancement. Nor did he appeal to popular prejudice and national feeling in order to become the idol of man. He looked at the crowd with the profound feeling of redemptive love and aimed to ennoble, enrich, and save it. He gave himself to the crowd with perfect and bewildering self-effacement. His great heart went out in bleeding and bless-

ing. The fountains of his love were moved to refreshing and transforming ministry.

You do not wonder, then, that his personality commands attention everywhere and is the subject of study throughout the world. He is the hope of the world, the only Person in whom and through whom the great social problems of humanity can be readjusted, solved, and mastered. He is the one Person whose grace and patience can make the world a better place to live in. He has the power we need, as we ally ourselves with all chivalrous men and women everywhere to forestall wrongdoing, eradicate evil, eliminate superstition, and bring this luxury-loving age to a more rigorous and generous consecration of its means and power, and thus reconstitute society in accordance with the will of God.

In our effort to put into operation in society the things for which Christ stands, we need to draw near to him for insight and inspiration. Society cannot be regenerated, nor can the world be redeemed, except in that large way which God planned and proposed through him. The great machinery of social reform will not move

harmoniously and with added momentum, nor in the right direction, save by the power and passion of his life.

Observe, then, first of all, his compassion for the crowd. When he saw it he was greatly moved. The depths of his soul were stirred. By the cords of love he was drawn to people to show them the way of life and to heal their sick.

The crowd we know. It is the same crowd that has been the sport and play of many a tyrant, that has known the heels of the world's Pharaohs, Herods, Cæsars, and Napoleons. It is the crowd which has on its back the lash marks of abject and remorseless tyrannies, damnable injustice, unpardonable barbarism and brutedom. It is the crowd that has the tiger marks of selfishness on its body; the weariness and languor of heartsickness on its soul; the crush and grind of existence graven on its brow. It is the crowd that has felt the oppression and rigor of monopoly—the same crowd that works the mills and looms of humanity, tills the soil, digs trenches, builds bridges, creates wealth, yet for the most part is forced to eat its bread in

bitterness. It is the crowd—the same crowd—that may be seen any evening, weary and beaten and baffled under the bondage of social wrongs. Its serried ranks are at our doors.

See the crowd in your mind's eye and look at Jesus. Give scope to imagination and let its luminous eyes penetrate the crowd's heart, with its hidden loves, romances, tragedies, hopes and fears; then halt to look at the majestic and benignant countenance of that Paragon of Love! Picture the crowd with its thirst and passion for better days, and then see over against it the Man of Sorrows. What a picture it is! But the marvel of it is this: Jesus takes the crowd up into his heart and defies the world.

That picture we need to make our own, if ever Christianity is to be the saving power of the world. It conveys the secret of Jesus's power and indicates why the people loved him, were drawn to him, and sought his favor and blessing. He lavished himself on their obscure and discouraged lives; he gave himself to their poor estate, and ministered to the needs of their un-

dying souls. The multitude followed him because it knew he cared for it and had come to abet its inalienable rights in the progress of events. Christ was the Friend of the crowd.

The relation grows upon us when we recall the possible attitudes a strong man may take in his relations to and dealings with the crowd. *He may scorn it.* He may condemn it. He may look at it through the eyes of a great man of letters who looked at England and said, "Forty millions of people—mostly fools." Or his attitude may be even as repulsive and inhuman as the attitude of that emperor of France who looked at the common people and with lofty scorn and insolent derision and snarling cynicism said, "The rabble! Let them eat straw."

The strong man may *exploit* the crowd and often does. It is said of a despot of the Middle Ages that one day he stood at a window of his castle to observe a troublesome throng rioting in front of his gate. He mused and chuckled to himself. In his heart of hearts he did not care a fig; and he resolved not to be outgeneraled.

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“I’ll give them bread, a bit of ribbondry, a measure of wine, and a holiday. That will suffice. They will close the day shouting, ‘Long live the king.’ ”

One may look at the crowd through the eyes of an unscrupulous mill owner, who knows that their necessities depend on him, and therefore insists that they work and toil at his terms or die as miserable dogs. The strong man may look at the crowd and deal with it as some conscienceless monopolists do. The crowd must live. It *may* live, *if it serves their purpose*. It must do what they say, take what they dole out, and, if that is not enough, yield up its mothers, its daughters, and its sons. “We will,” say they, “have our way with the crowd. We are the castled knights on the chessboard of life. They are the pawns. If they stand in our way, we will sweep them off!”

The strong man may look at the crowd as Jesus did. He looked, saw it, felt the deep undercurrents of its humanity, and resolved to release its hidden wealth. He, therefore, drew near and took upon himself all its infirmities and sickness. He

felt the emotions of the man whose hands were hard and beaten, but whose soul was alive with sublime passion. He felt for the outcast and looked down through the centuries and saw the poverty and the slavery, the heartaches and homesickness of humanity, and with one tremendous sweep of love drew the crowd to himself, and thus—to God.

Then, in the second place, Jesus Christ, as no other, had a vision of the possibilities of the crowd. It was to him a golden harvest of righteousness. He saw in the men and women who thronged him the buried magnificence of their nature, that needed only the touch and pull of love and patience. What Lincoln saw, Jesus observed—the hundred homely virtues which make a people great; the endurance which makes them strong; the fortitude, the faith and the hope which are the foundation of progress and civilization. In some, who were considered but dust, he saw jewels of manly and womanly character. He saw in the crowd the preachers and philanthropists, the poets and philosophers, the priests and reformers of

the future. Intrenched in the crowd was the kingdom of God.

At this point Christendom has erred. Unlike Christ, it has underestimated the crowd, and, to its detriment and peril, neglected it. It is seen in the politics of nations. Supposed leaders inform us that the crowd cannot be trusted; the populace cannot understand. The populace must be cajoled and driven, but never led. But there is a great deal of human nature in the worst of men and always enough goodness and sanity to turn the tide of things. Give them a Christ to lead and the masses are sure to follow.

The great mistake of George III was just this: His Majesty saw nothing very superior in the American farmers. He forgot that they were his kin. To him they were but pioneers, adventurers, and he failed to see underneath their homespun the invincible prophets and statesmen of a new era, and sandwiched between a host of warm-blooded men and women, as royal and clean as the most select in the king's own court.

It is frequently true of the church that

the crowd is not in its sacred precincts. Perhaps the church has no longer Christ's heart, nor his eyes, nor his gifts and graces. It may be that the crowd is at fault: the old thirst and passion for God and righteousness may be gone. But be that as it may, the crowd was always where Jesus was.

Even now he is in the midst of it. Behind the crowd, aye, beside it, is the Christ. Ecclesiastics may not be there; but he is. In his own good time the crowd will wake and rise in its might to confound the mighty and vanquish the strong. It is often said that reform must begin at the top among the reflective and informed. But it may begin at the bottom, and there it will begin, if Christ is stationed there with his all-conquering faith and passion.

The tenderest and most inspiring thought has been partly anticipated: Christ *consecrated* himself to the crowd. He not merely thought well of it; *He served it*. The purpose of his life was to get the crowd safely anchored in righteousness.

This is extremely interesting. Christ's interest in it is a saving one. He has not

left it to the wild waves of disaster and ruin. He has a line on the masses and knows when and where to pull their members into safety. His work of sympathy and intercession continues. To it he has consecrated himself. The risks he took in primitive days, he takes now. He does not sit somewhere on the edge of the world to see how things come and go. He is in the game of life, and never is a loser. He is resident as the controlling dynamic of a slow but sure, extensive but benevolent evolution of social regeneration and fulfillment. He is not counting on beneficent earthquakes, or timely comets, or tidal waves. The years of restoration are long and tedious; but he is in the years, with a hand as strong as his heart is warm, and a purpose as beneficent as it is inexorable and final. Some day the crowd will rise and hail him king. Until then, let all who know and love him lift their hearts and sing:

All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all.

JESUS CHRIST THE BURDEN
BEARER

CHAPTER X

JESUS CHRIST THE BURDEN BEARER

THE burdens of the world are many, but there is only one Burden Bearer, and his deliverance is for all. He stands at the threshold of every need as the strong Son of God, whose all-embracing love never fails. His comforting message to man is, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Such information is welcome and inspiring, for all of us have burdens of which we are trying to rid ourselves. The most hopeful have some one thing or two pressing on the heart or weighing heavily on the back. In every assembly of people, if not in every household, is at least one person who would flee away from cumbering care and be at rest. Perhaps we have all wished at some time for the wings of the morning, that in flight we might secure freedom. But flight gives no respite be-

cause burdens have pinions as fleet as the wind and reach the contemplated place of refuge a trifle ahead of schedule time, where, on our arriving, they greet us with a dismal "I am here too!"

Neither can our burdens be left at another's door. You will not accept mine, and I am not quite convinced that the one I have is lighter than yours. If we leave them at a neighbor's door, they are returned by the next express with a few new ones tucked in for being so thoughtless and presumptuous. Nor do they get lighter by the resolve to bear up under them. Sheer will power may take us a long way, but if the burden continues on the back it will ultimately exhaust one's strength. Burdens may be borne with magnificent tranquillity and heroic fortitude, splendid courage and exquisite determination; but at length the hand tires and drops, the lustrous eye grows dim and twilight creeps over the mind. "The burden," says Dr. Jowett, "registers its presence in a wearied body. The secret moan results in aching bones." Burdens wear out the human engine, exhaust its

driving power, and the mighty levers refuse to move in response to the heroic spirit within.

What, then, are we to do with our burdens? We cannot escape them through flight; neighbors refuse to house them; and they crush us if their heft is unduly prolonged. They may be our ruin, unless some means of deliverance is afforded.

Fortunately we have Jesus Christ. In him we may find help and succor. If his great words of solace on this subject are to be taken seriously—and we certainly believe they should be—the whole question of burden bearing has been solved forever, and several things become very clear and comforting to us.

First, the burdens on our backs are on the heart of the Saviour.

Secondly, we are assured that we need not bear them alone and unassisted.

Thirdly, our burdens become the means of refreshing rest.

The burden on man's back is on the heart of the Saviour. By his perfect omniscience he comprehends us and it. How it twists and turns us on the way,

darkens our outlook, embitters the spirit, fevers the brain, frets the heart, saps the soul, he understands. Nothing about it can be concealed, for he bears it on his heart.

“No, you can tell me nothing new,” said a mother to her daughter. “I have borne you on my heart for weeks. Tell me nothing; just come and rest your weary soul.” Such is God’s relation to us through Christ; and no truth needs more emphasis and restatement than that. God cares; and the fact that he does already takes some of the heft from the burden and some pain from the spot on which it hangs. His understanding of us strengthens for the day of trial and fortifies the soul against evil. We are confident, patient, and strong because he is faithful, long-suffering, and kind. The burdens on our back are less heavy because he bears us on his heart.

O Love divine, that stooped to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear!
On thee we cast each earthborn care;
We smile at pain while thou art near.

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On thee we fling our burdening woe,
O Love divine, forever dear;
Content to suffer, while we know,
Living and dying, thou art near!

If there is anything which makes a burden heavy, it is misunderstanding or cold indifference. "No one seems to know or care," has wrecked countless lives. When the world moves right on like an iceberg in the ocean, cold and inexorable, men and women that otherwise might have been strong languish and faint. How often there is weeping in one block and dancing in the next! A group of mourners meet at a grave, and a stone's throw away others are indulging in frivolity. There is crape on one door and a wedding bell on the one two houses removed. For many of us, that is the world we know, see, and meet; and all the while the soul within us hungers for sympathy, solace, peace. It wants some one like Jesus Christ, in whose perfect love it may find respite, as does a tired child on the bosom of its mother.

Many of the great tragedies of history are directly traceable to indifference. Be-

cause nobody cared, or those who did were too weak to help, bankruptcy of soul followed. The world was cold and no heart beat with soul-stirring compassion; and so, discouraged and forlorn, they came to naught. Keats, the brilliant youth, went down to dust because few hearts appreciated the divinity of his talents. Byron's star might have been a second sun had he been wooed and loved by wise and prudent instead of foolish and wanton women. Sir Joshua Reynolds was almost crushed when in his youth he brought a drawing to his father, who, in his severity and coldness, looked it over, and then wrote at the bottom of it, "Joshua did this in one of his lazy moments." So also a Maine jurist, unmeaningly perhaps, harassed the heart of Longfellow. Misunderstanding increases the heft of the burdens we bear; indifference makes them crushing. If people would only steal into the twilight when we sit there alone, or to our firesides when we are disconsolate, what a difference it would make! But too frequently no one comes but the Nazarene. But he suffices; for his incomparable

strength and sympathy puts us at rest. His word gives heart's ease. "I know," he seems to say, "all about it, and you must be afraid no more. Let me abide with you until the morning breaks."

Now, if Jesus knows, as he does, he will do several things for us:

He will convince us of the fact. Recall for a moment the story of Hagar—the long, lonely, bitter story of an outcast. She was the victim of a crude and merciless social order, and was thrust out and made the prey of the elements like driftwood tossed by the sea, like a leaf driven by the wind, like a soul caught in a mighty maelstrom of sorrow. But some one knew and that some one cared. He stood in the way, and, when her heart in despair gave itself up to die, the majestic presence of his infinite love hailed her. O, how her troubled heart leaped into the folds of compassion as she cried, "Thou, God, seest me!" The burden fell from her back the moment she learned it was on the heart of God.

Then if Jesus Christ knows, we can expect him to shield us from what would otherwise crush and ruin us. No testing

time will come to us but there comes with it also a way of escape. With the burden comes Christ, the Burden Bearer. He will plant his standard in the face of onrushing floods; he will stem the tide and be the shadow of a great rock in the heat, a shelter in the time of storm.

Convince people of such support and companionship, and you take much of the weight from the burdens they bear. When David saw his enemies assemble in bold array he trembled; but when an hour later he went to the sanctuary and found God awaiting him, he cried with sheer joy: "I will not be afraid for ten thousands of people, that rise up against me round about; for thou, O Lord, art a shield unto me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head."

He will give us visions to stimulate confidence and arouse battalions of strength. To Dr. Samuel Johnson, who sits weeping over his mother, he gives "Rasselas." To John Bunyan, as he languishes in Bedford jail, he gives a vision that makes him immortal. To Paul in the storm-tossed ship comes the angel of his presence; and Paul knows that One is with him greater than

thunder, rain, lightning; aye, greater than all cosmic forces combined. The reins of life are in God's hands, and man, whom he bears on his heart, is safe.

But a greater truth still awaits the heart. That God knows us so thoroughly that nothing can surprise him is a sublime truth. We can scarcely hope for a greater or better; but here it is: God in Christ is *under* our burdens. His glorious omnipotence rubs shoulder with us in the affairs of life. His sovereign presence supplements our weakness. So thoroughly is he identified with us that what seemed to crush us becomes a means of grace, an opportunity for his divine life to fill us with its infinite resourcefulness.

When F. B. Morse, the inventor, was asked the secret of his success, and people wondered at his calm and magnanimous deportment in times of trial and opposition, he said, "I have had a Friend." His Friend was the great Burden Bearer of the world. He got over the hard places because he had Jesus Christ. His Friend was so strong and buoyant, sympathetic and all-sufficing, that it was a genuine

pleasure to scale the Hill Difficulty. The burden was shared, and therefore light. It was not lifted from the back; it was lightened by another coming under it.

Just so is it with us when Jesus Christ exercises his Lordship in our lives. Not all burdens are cast off; but we gain a Friend to bear what remain. Some are eliminated. Fearfulness is one of them. Fearfulness is that depression of heart which the soul feels when it thinks itself cut aloof from God. That feeling is dissipated when we remember Jesus Christ is in the yoke with us, and has placed at our disposal all he has and is. Fear subsides, the fevered pulse drops, and the heart ceases its ache. We no longer walk like abandoned castaways, but like sons of God basking in Eternal Goodness.

Another burden eliminated is perplexity. Perplexity is a burden of the head, as fear is of the heart. Perplexity is shortsightedness run riot. It is mental confusion and groping in the dark. That, too, disappears when the Light of the World steps within the circle of our life. He lightens up all who come unto him and appointeth

all their paths. "If I stoop," says Browning,

"Into a dark, tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
Close to my breast: its splendor, soon or late,
Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day."

Then there is the burden of possible dissolution. Death is a lion in the way which all of us fear at some time. We evade the issue, shun the subject, and cast it from us. But even that fear has to go. Recall for a moment the death scene described in "St. Cuthbert's." Elsie McPhatter is dying, but not alone in her final battle. At two o'clock at night the minister's bell rang. He answered it, for he knew the waters were rising around poor Elsie and he was needed at the helm. He started through the frosty night; the snow creaked under his feet and the air was dark and cold. Far out in the distance he saw a solitary light. He looked at it for a moment and then said, "There is the battlefield of the world." When he came into the room, where fear and trembling prevailed in the attendants, he prayed,

“They shall see His face, and his name shall be written on their foreheads.” Then the fevered sufferer said: “It is bright and blithesome where I walk. The way is full of light and beauty.”

And so it was—the Burden Bearer was there. He knows the light that burns in the darkness, and if it may guide a poor parish minister to the side of suffering, surely he himself will find the spot. And when he comes he takes the burden and puts it on his back; and going down the valley of the shadow, his rod and staff comfort us.

He gives us rest. “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Rest! Rest! How inspiring is the sound to our weary hearts! How sublime the experience of it! Christ gives us so much of himself; he devotes himself so truly to us that the storm and the fever of life subside and leave us only his marvelous peace. It is what he promised; and he never fails to discharge his covenants. Yes, he serves us so comfortingly that we are half glad that a burden is on the back.

Jesus tranquilizes us—he rests us—because he inspires our hearts with confidence, courage, faith. His companionship in the yoke of trial is an antidote for worry, fear, weakness. If we have him, it matters not what the circumstance is that harasses us, we are pacified by his calm and triumphant mien. Unconsciously we imbibe his spirit, and are unafraid. His great soul electrifies us and the marvelous energies that move his soul quicken our own. Something of his soul passion possesses us, so that whatever betide, like Paracelsus, in Browning's great epic, each of us can say:

I go to prove my soul!
 I see my way as birds their trackless way.
 I shall arrive! What time, what circuit first,
 I ask not: But unless God send his hail
 Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,
 In some time, his good time, I shall arrive:
 He guides me and the bird.

Jesus Christ rests us, because he assures us that whatever the burden or load may be which we carry we are pulled in the direction of home. Somewhere up the road is the last turn which leads there. The City of Destiny lies beyond the Hill

Difficulty, and we shall see its sunlit spires flashing through the circling clouds! I know this is so because Christ never joins us in the yoke of toil or trial except to pull us that way. To go with him is to journey surely and unerringly toward the Father's house; and so the pathway of trial leads to the precincts of peace.

If I still hold closely to him,
What hath he at last?
Sorrow vanquished, labor ended,
Jordan passed.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE LESSON
OF SOLITUDE

CHAPTER XI

JESUS CHRIST AND THE LESSON OF SOLITUDE

THERE is an exuberance to Jesus Christ which is at once the admiration and ambition of man. Weariness and fatigue are almost entirely absent in his life, and he moves among people with inspiring poise and buoyancy. He is bright and vivacious, pungent and profound, and his words flow with the cadence of music and scintillate with the brightness of light. Though he is constantly enriching others, he is never poor; active in covering the sore spots of the world, he is not contaminated; persistent in teaching great truths and healing the sick, he is not dull nor disappointing. As no other person he was engaged in bringing order out of moral and social confusion; but he himself is never distracted or discomposed. He knows what to do and does it with clear head, steady hand, warm heart. The throng is always pressing

him, but his strength is not drained. He had the rhythm and charm, the vigor and grace of a spring day, which emancipates latent energies in hill and field and makes the earth blossom as the garden of God.

Jesus has been called the Man of Sorrows; but as truly was he the Man of Optimism and Cheer. He moved among the struggling masses and drew them to his heart by strength as well as sympathy, cheer as well as tears, heroism as well as patience. Though he bore the burdens of men, he ever walked with the quiet, triumphant tread of a king. Only once did he fall, and that was when he carried the cross for a sin-cursed world. Even then his spirit did not fail him. His body touched the ground, but his soul stood erect in its incomparable strength. Though all nature murmured at the crime, the sun was eclipsed, and the earth rocked with remonstrance, Jesus was self-possessed until he bowed his head and said, "It is finished."

Solitude had much to do with the making of his life. He kept himself fresh by union with unfailing springs. He was in touch with God. He kept himself in

a state of conservation by communion. He was mighty in his outer life because he knew the rare art of isolating the inner life. His public life was one of power because his private life was one of prayer. The tides of his strength were never at ebb, because the great ocean behind him crowded him with a flood. It was possible for him to be his best because in solitude he was energized by the God of Hosts.

Jesus sought solitude because he wished to conserve a healthy relation between his resources and the use he made of them. Expenditure and income are mutually dependent upon each other. One cannot give out without taking in. The hand that lifts must itself be sustained. The breast which nurses the growing babe must be nourished by hidden springs. One cannot serve a lavish table on a meager pantry. Which is only another way of saying that the same principle holds in the larger relations of life. Christ realized the fact and disciplined himself accordingly. He knew the springs of life and visited them. Though he had compassion, he did not

allow the crowd to separate him from the fountains that sustained him. When it could not be otherwise he sent them away that he might retire and recover poise, power, peace. The Gospels note the fact with ever-recurring regularity. "He withdrew into the wilderness." "Rising early in the morning, he departed into the desert to pray." "He went into a mountain, and continued there all night in prayer to God." Retirement was a habit of Jesus, and solitude was a discipline which he never neglected. He was not stranger to the great sources of existence and, therefore, never depleted his strength.

"The streams that move the mills of the world rise in solitary places," says Emerson. That sounds new to some of us, but it was an old law with which Jesus was familiar and he never transgressed. In solitude he refreshed his soul and girded himself for the field of battle. In silence and isolation he kept his armor intact and himself in a state of health. In communion with God he renewed his spirit; and so it happened that his countenance never lost its light, his words

their authority, his hands their deftness and healing power.

There are times when we wonder at the lack of robustness in the religious life of to-day. Men and women do not scintillate. Their eyes are like the eyes which Marguerite Audaux describes in *Marie Claire*: "They do not shine at all. They make one think of a rainbow which has almost melted away." Their glory has departed, because they have failed where Jesus succeeded. Their lives are not in touch with God and consequently their resources are in a state of depletion. They are in touch with the earth, and, with its dust, their strength crumbles away.

Jesus, in the next place, realized that personality is the main asset in one's life, and, therefore, one's first duty is—to find the self. Solitude is essential not merely to find God but *soul*.

Some things about ourselves we can discover in society. How clever we are, or facetious, interesting, and resourceful, we can determine there. But the really great things about us, the terrible and sublime forces of mind, heart, will, are revealed

only in those deep moments when, detached from the world, we see ourselves in the calm white light of God's presence.

It is said of Jenny Lind that one day as she was rehearsing for a reception she suddenly saw the sacredness of the gift God had so graciously bestowed upon her. The discovery came with the thrill and thrall of revelation, and moved her to tears. She saw God in herself. There in the solitude of her studio, the doors being shut, she saw herself. And from that moment on there was a new element of power in her music—a subtile, ethereal quality that swayed her audiences like leaves in the mellow breeze of autumn.

Abraham Lincoln, of tender memory, was a son of solitude. In the primeval forests and fields of Indiana, among the pines and hemlocks, and beside the watercourses, he became acquainted with humanity and God. There, in the presence of overbrooding divinity, Columbuslike, he discovered also himself. So was it with Jesus. In solitude, in the presence of God, he saw himself and became conscious of his mission. There he became aware of those

priceless faculties of his nature which never knew impoverishment nor defeat.

We have seen the same miracle under our very eyes. Here is a painter who for years goes on doing mediocre work; or here is a musician who produces ordinary songs; or a poet who lives on bread and water because his verses can earn him no more. Suddenly these men come under the influence of overshadowing love. Love finds them. They look into the face of love and become aware of themselves. The paintings of the artist now do all but breathe and walk; the virtuoso's music pulsates with emotion and passion; and the poet's verses abound with charm and grace. Love discovers and crowns them.

Now, Jesus was loved. He was loved by the multitude, by little children, and by his kin. Their affection meant much to him and inspired him to generous deeds; but the love that *found him* and *made him* was the love he felt in solitude with God. That love discovered him and made him conscious of his life work. Not until he rested his head on the bosom of the Father did he know himself to be the

Eternal Son who came forth to mingle *with* and walk *among* men and women in soul-redeeming ministry.

Deep down in our lives are emotions, sentiments, buried dreams, songs, pictures, sermons that only God can evoke and bring into expression. Not until we get away from our dependence upon men and machines, and in solitude look to God, will they ever come to conscious life and power. When we see ourselves as God does we are henceforth among the elect. He who finds himself has also found his destiny and goal.

If chosen men had never been alone,
In deep mid-silence open-doored to God,
No greatness ever had been dreamed or done.

Jesus apprehended that solitude is essential as a shield against worldliness.

Man's great peril is worldliness. It is the thing which gets into his life and works endless mischief and wrong. But in solitude, alone with the God of one's being, a man finds it hard to yield *to* or compromise *with* the world. The conscience is never more sensitive than in the hour of communion, when right and wrong are seen in the light of God's holiness. Nor

is the imagination ever more lofty and discerning than in the hour of prayer; nor the will so irresistible as when in solitude it gets its cue for action from God. Solitude is, therefore, essential to moral, social, and religious health. Solitude is the means of making us proof against infection by causing us to be spiritually minded. Therefore none of us are safe unless we bolt the door between the world and ourselves and open our lives to that presence which filleth all in all.

Take for example the matter of compromise, at which I have hinted. How terrible and ubiquitous is the temptation! Jesus was asked to compromise; but he fortified himself against it by prayer and fasting. Lincoln was asked to compromise. He was told that he could never be elected President if he persisted in advocating certain national policies for which he stood. But he stood by the final decree of his conscience. Washington was asked to compromise. They were driven and lashed by abuse and criticism because they refused. They knew they had to live with themselves, and that would be impossible if

they betrayed the deeper voices of the soul.

The temptation makes its appeal to us in many and subtle forms. It comes to us in easy-going maxims, which are admitted as quite conventional and convenient. Here is one of them: "When in Rome do as the Romans do." Here is another: "What everybody does must be right." Still another runs like this: "Stolen pleasures are the sweetest." How often we have these words cast at us, and it never occurs that they are the slogans of license and lawlessness! We have to think twice before we see their peril, and are not aware of the fact that compliance with them is giving the world foothold on the most sacred soil of the soul.

Against all such dangers Jesus Christ secured himself. He fortified himself in secret places by cultivating God's presence. He made himself aware of God's purpose and then consecrated himself to it. He communed with his awe-inspiring and soul-satisfying presence. He lived an incomparable life because in solitary places he immersed himself in the triumphantly spiritual streams that flow out of Zion.

JESUS CHRIST'S SPIRITUAL
SUPREMACY

CHAPTER XII

JESUS CHRIST'S SPIRITUAL SUPREMACY

THE career of Jesus Christ is an inexhaustible treasury of inspiration which ministers to every need and mood of man. If one goes to it with the purpose of enriching the mind, it supplies the most stimulating philosophy of life; or the heart, it opens reservoirs of infinite love; or the will, it promises and permits alliance with Omnipotence. In Jesus Christ the weary are rested, the fearful calmed, the sinful forgiven, the heavy laden strengthened in God. In him every fundamental necessity of man's various nature is met and supplied.

The magnitude of Jesus' influence is incalculable, and grows upon us in the contemplation of it. Here is a man whose personal bearing and conduct, confidence and calm, vision and insight, patience and strength were a constant source of surprise. The affluence of his resources and the generosity with which he disbursed

them; the buoyancy of his manhood and the democratic method of making himself felt; the magnanimity of his heart and the patience he exercised toward his fellow men were the table talk of the time. So earnest, gracious, and sincere were these prandial reflections of the people that little children, as well as grown up men and women, learned to know and love him. He was the idol of a few, the hero of some, and the Messiah of a host.

When Jesus looked at an audience it was the most natural thing in the world for his hearers to assert and magnify his authority and superiority. There was something so contagious and convincing about him that even his enemies had to admit his mastery and leadership. He understood people, and they knew it. He was kin to their most secret emotions and aspirations, and needed only to open his lips to ignite the attention of friends and foe alike. As leaves turn to the rising sun, so the souls of men and women responded to the charm and simplicity, vigor and virility of his matchless life. He made no claim but the crowd justified it. He

might be unconventional in his method of doing things, but the throng that dogged his steps defended him. They insisted that no man ever spake as he, or brought such solace, scope, and peace to man. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, raised the dead. Men and women with worn-out, jaded, sin-cursed lives stepped within the circle of his influence and were regenerated and renewed. Peasants and Pharisees listened to his talk about birds, flowers, fruit, and, in spite of themselves, were led to think of God. He walked by the side of the wayfaring, and their hearts grew warm with a sense of the divine. It was a way that Jesus had. People looked at him and became conscious of God. His noble, manly face brought the Infinite very near their hearts and luminously present in the field of the consciousness. To many of them he was the image of the eternal God, full of grace and truth.

Jesus exercised the same power over nature. As he was king of men's lives, so also was he sovereign in the power he wielded over the cosmic world, with its mysterious laws and forces. He had a

hold on nature and its secrets that never failed nor deceived him. In the midst of the most elemental and titanic phenomena he walked unabashed and unafraid. He lived in the universe with the perfect freedom that a man occupies a house. In it he was secure and sovereign.

Just that is the impression we gain of Jesus when we view his calm and poise and eloquent abandon in the storm-tossed ship, when he rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. We feel that we are in the presence of one who not only rules the spirit of man, but is also perfect master of the environment in which that spirit is disciplined and matured. He holds in his grip the reins of the physical universe and towers above it in his mastery and control. He is the Lord of life, majestic in his knowledge of it, and sovereign in its operation.

That we can believe through the partial mastery of man over matter. Jesus Christ's leadership we can concede by virtue of what we are in relation to the material universe. What that relation is hardly needs elucidation: man's superiority is a

universally acknowledged fact. Mind conquers the most formidable obstacles and does not hesitate before the so-called *impossible*. Wherever man steps on the scene of conflict, he does so to conquer. What he believes he can do he does. He overrides opposition however extensive and obstinate. The mountain which encumbers his path he tunnels; the electricity which burns his barns and splinters his trees he tames, and, as if in revenge, makes it do his work. The inexhaustible energy of the earth he converts into engines of progress; and so complete is his mastery that civilization must ever be recognized as man's victory over the opposition and severity of the cosmic world.

But what is more grandiose still is witnessed in the *reach* of man when he combats the things of space and spirit. He explores space and brings forth its game of stars, planets, moons, and suns. He makes the imponderable air carry his messages, and extracts from ether the power that drives his mills, lights and heats his homes. In physiology he numbers and names the bones and muscles, organs and

functions of the body. In chemistry he goes deeper and resolves them into their constituent elements. In psychology he maps out the departments of the mind. In biology he traces life through æons of struggle to its primal source. In geology he records the environment in which life was developed. In theology he familiarizes himself with the soul and God. These, and many others, are the various achievements of man by which his superiority and excellence are attested and justified.

We can, therefore, believe in the supremacy of Christ. His greater glory is anticipated by our nature. Because of the secrets we can disclose, we cannot doubt his ability to go farther and deeper. Because of our achievements, we cannot question his. Because we can forestall the ravages of disease, we are sure he can vanquish death. Because we can use the tides to our advantage, we believe he can still the sea. The exercise of such supremacy is entirely consonant with such a life as he lived. One would be disappointed not to find it there. Such life and such power belong together—supplement each other.

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Then, too, we can believe the sovereignty of Christ over nature, because of certain evident instincts that prophesy such mastery as Jesus exercised. Large as the world is, we feel cramped in it. There is about us an element of life which decidedly declares that the body is a cell and the earth a prison for the undying soul. The soul is in bondage and craves just such supremacy as Jesus Christ's. Greatness, superior greatness, is an instinct of life, and so manifest that we are restless for the coming of a more perfect day, when the dream of Phillips Brooks, who speaks for us all, may be realized:

O, for a wider life where flower
With more of breath gains more of bloom;
With more of peace since more of power,
And more of rest since more of room.

The world was "roomy" for Jesus' soul because he had in himself the sovereign life that could control and rule. The waves and winds obeyed because Omnipotence filled his heart. He could command attention and challenge allegiance and suc-

ceed in every exigency because he was the incomparable Son of the living God.

So we look at the incident on the lake again and learn that Jesus Christ's supremacy contemplates beneficent ends. He speaks the word and saves the boat, because in its shell are the hope and salvation of the world. He uses his great power for moral ends. He commands the waves for the sake of humanity, which he came to save. In mercy he rebukes the wind, that his power may save those who have sinned. He rules nature that he may perfect humanity.

"Why, then," some one asks, "is the storm permitted? Does God delight in the anguish, fear, and weakness of man? Why are flood and earthquake and tidal-waves of ruin?"

These phenomena are permitted for the same reason that some seasons are cold and ruthless, and others warm and balmy; for the same reason that a hill is hard to climb, sickness painful, sin ruinous, and death desolating. They are permitted for moral and religious ends: that man may become aware of himself, his social need

and spiritual destiny. The boat is lashed by storm because the disciples have something deep and profound to learn. Paris is harassed by flood, because gay, fashionable, world-loving Paris needs to see itself in the light of a great and enduring moral destiny. Great and beautiful as it is, San Francisco needs the inscrutable darkness that follows in the wake of the earthquake and grim death, that the god of gold may be superseded by the God of spirit, social purity, and moral righteousness. Messina falls into ruins that the great heart of brotherhood may be unloosed and the saving strength of charity and religion may be bared. Suffering is the highway to self-discovery and God.

We must never forget that behind life and its hardships, in the midst of social wreck and ruin, is mercy. Beneficence is there, but behind the cloud. Good-will and love are there. At the stinging end of the whipping wind is—God. In danger and disaster, when the wheels of commerce stop to heed, are felt the pulse of humanity. Lives must be thrown down that, in dust and ashes, they may dis-

cover soul. Mercy must chastise that, in pain and regret, man may abrogate the things that precipitate punishment. The eagle stirs the nest that the fledglings may find their wings and be the monarchs of the air. The nest is fouled that the royal blood of the bird may protest and leap forth to fulfill its destiny.

Just so is it in life. We ponder its hard facts; see its famine-stricken areas; feel its earthquakes; hear the roar of storm and flood; but are not disturbed. The Potter is at the wheel, and knows what he has designed. The Refiner is at the pot and knows when the liquid iron is ready for the mold. God is not indifferent to his purpose, but knows and cares. He is present every moment, and the elements are plastic in his hands. Regret and shame there will be none when his work is done and all his purposes are realized forever.

THE CROSS THE SPIRITUAL
MAGNET OF THE WORLD

CHAPTER XIII

THE CROSS THE SPIRITUAL MAGNET OF THE WORLD

THE cross of Jesus Christ is the spiritual magnet of the world and is drawing to itself all mankind. It is the center of the world's thought and idealism, hope and aspiration, life and culture. When Jesus was crucified on Calvary, his influence was local and provincial, but to-day his name is revered in every village, hamlet, province, state, and nation. There are few thrones on which he does not sit, and the hearts in which he reigns are an exceedingly great multitude. The influence of his cross is as widely distributed as gravitation, which draws all things to a common center.

Wherein, then, lies the marvelous and irresistible power of the cross? How has this instrument of cruelty and death become the symbol of love and life?

It is a commonplace that the contemporaries of Jesus in the Roman state viewed

the cross with horror. They declared it to be ignominy incarnated. It was the hope of every Roman that none of his fellow citizens should ever be executed by it. As we think of the gallows, or electric chair, or guillotine, so was the cross regarded then. It was the object of fear, derision, contempt. But as such it is no longer regarded. The ignominy, shame, dishonor which it symbolized in ancient times are foreign to our minds and distress us not. In the course of the centuries a miracle has been wrought and an undoubted transformation has occurred. To-day the cross is held in reverence and miniature copies of it in gold, silver, and wood adorn the bodies of the living and the dead. It is enpinnacled in the sky and chiseled into the altars of the sanctuary. Around the cross we weave the tendrils of our love and with sheer joy and unbounded gratitude sing its praise.

In the cross of Christ I glory,
 Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
 Gathers round its head sublime.

The cross has this all-subduing and mag-

netic power, because it gives dramatic expression to eternal love. In the transcendent sacrifice of Jesus the love of God is unbosomed and revealed.

This is all the more remarkable when we recall what he was in his earthly life. Here was a person who had complete mastery of himself and his spiritual resources, and knew how to use them for his personal safety and well-being. From what he achieved in other relations we have grounds for believing that Jesus commanded power which could have crushed his enemies and the cross they had made for his destruction. Jesus lived in the assurance that all things were given into his hands and that he could neither fail nor fall. It was, therefore, possible for him to circumvent those who sought and planned his ruin. But he did not so use his power. He walked straight toward Golgotha, and "as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." He accepted the various grades of humiliation and sacrifice, until the ancient glory which he had with the Father was shrouded in death. He allowed his enemies to nail him to the

cross; he made his death with malefactors and was put away as a common criminal. And what has happened? Ever since the hour in which he bowed his head and said, "It is finished," that darkest of all tragedies has inspired the conviction that on Calvary eternal love stooped to the lowest level in order to heal the broken in heart and wash away the sin of the world.

It is very strange that love never seems very real to us until we have seen it in some dramatic and tragic experience. Perhaps there is a kindly providence in the ancient experience of human love, the course of which is not always smooth. The way is rough and thorny, and the goal desired often long hidden behind impenetrable thickets and seemingly insurmountable cliffs. But in those hours of yearning and suspense when the heartstrings are taut, if not torn, love comes to its supreme rewards. Only after it has passed through a gauntlet of treachery, trickery, plotting, and jealousy does it rise before us "passing strange, deep and unforgettable." When it suffers love is seen in its divinest feature.

So it comes to pass that we look at

Calvary, as it stands back there in the shadows of antiquity, with its somber setting of darkened heavens, surging mobs, tremulous earthquakes, and are amazed and deeply moved. Whittier expressed himself none too feelingly when he sang:

Well may the cavern-depths of Earth
Be shaken, and her mountains nod;
Well may the sheeted dead come forth
To gaze upon a suffering God!

Well may the temple shrine grow dim,
And shadows veil the cherubim,
When he, the chosen one of heaven,
A sacrifice for guilt is given!

Sacrifice, pain, death, make things real to us. They plow right through the superficialities of existence and show us the essence of things. It is often so in domestic relations. We come to know mother's love not by the hundred gentle ministries that fill the day, but by the chance discovery of seeing her in tears. When we hear her sob in the solitude of her room, or pray with trembling lips—suddenly we see love in all its deep, mellow, and grateful fullness. Sorrow does not make love more beautiful

to us; but it reveals its strength. In the tears of silent sorrow, we discover love's heart, and remember with chastened meaning its embraces and endearing ministries. Everywhere it is the cross that unlocks life's deepest realities. The heart that bleeds reveals the heart that loves.

It is true in economic and political life. It may be that a people, in the course of years, may get away from the great ideals that stirred and strengthened their fathers. They are not half so vigilant, patriotic, unselfish, and sincere. Compromise and concession play a large part in their public life. There are fewer great convictions to move and warm their hearts, and consequently they are more self-complacent and unimpassioned. But the moment a great man falls, as Lincoln fell, while waging war with the forces of evil, the heart mellows and warms up. The sacrifice of one great heart rekindles the altar-fires of ten million homes. The old fires of past years of sacrifice flare up and burn again. By the fall of one, ten legions rise to move in their might.

All people are proud of their national

colors. They do well to rise and salute them when brought in their midst. But the flags that mean most are those which passed through storms of fire and hail; that fell to the ground in the heat of battle; were drenched in blood and trampled under foot, but lifted again and again until at length the shout of victory passed over the battle line and drowned the groans of the wounded and dying. Those are the flags—old, tattered, torn—that magnetize us and move us as with a southern gale of passion. They signify national greatness, patriotism, renown. They, *they* are the price of blood, and as such symbolize the unalloyed and incomparable virtues of a nation's life.

It is so with the cross of Jesus. As a man, his life is unexcelled for goodness. As a teacher, he said many things which fall upon our ears with the touch, tenderness, and refreshing of twilight clover-laden breezes. As a prophet he will never be excelled for insight and vision, leadership and renown; but the thing that draws us to him, humbles and subdues us, is his death. When we see him die we kneel in

awe and tears: and in the moments of chastened vision which follow know that he was none other than the Son of God who came to take away the sin of the world.

It is said of a great philosopher that he lamented his "fading faith." It troubled him at times that he could no longer believe as others. He asked many startling questions, and with his saberlike intellect cut the stem of many traditions; but, though he was esteemed for his brilliancy and erudition, he was unhappy and disconsolate. One day, however, he stopped philosophizing. He approached the cross and in patient reverence stood and looked at it until its great significance soaked his being. "Surely," said he, "here is a mystery transcends all. The simple believer is right when he affirms that here died the Son of God. It must be so, for my own nature thunders *he lived as such.*"

That is a common experience. Much we cannot elucidate or fathom; there are depths in the nature of Christ we cannot sound; heights we cannot scale; mysteries we cannot penetrate; but the scourged,

mocked, crucified Jesus of Nazareth hanging there on Calvary's dismal height hushes all misgiving, fear, and doubt. Before that awful tragedy we are dumb—we stand in the presence of the adorable God!

The cross of Jesus is the great spiritual magnet of the world because it is the secret of human brotherhood. As people are drawn to the Christ they are drawn to each other. Old lines of demarcation are withdrawn, racial prejudices disarmed, personal animosities forgiven and forgotten. His suffering love melts the heart, so that the great mingle with the low, the rich with the poor, the strong with the weak, in soul-saving ministry. As we approach the cross we approach each other, for we are crowding a common center. With the cross of Jesus in the center of modern life, humanity moves from its farthest reaching circumference inwardly along the many radii of his influence and power. As we approach Christ, we touch and mingle. China, Japan, India, Africa, Europe, America, as they approach the cross, are merged into a great state of brotherhood—one and inseparable.

It is the pull of the magnet which is bringing the world together. It is the crucified Lord who is filling the earth with love, and if at length the world will be a solidarity and fraternity, where war will be no more, and the weapons and accouterments of death will be converted into instruments of mercy and culture—to the cross of Christ belongs the credit. But if that era is still removed in the region of possibility, and only measurably realized, be it known to all men that it is due to human weakness and sin. There is virtue at the center, but we are not there, and its contagion does not sway us. We are too far removed from Calvary and its bleeding heart, from the cross and its ineffable compassion, to leaven the world with fraternal feeling. Once we get there, and hold ourselves to it with fervor and faith, the nations of the earth will be one, even as Christ was one and indivisible in God.

The cross is the great magnet of the world because it magnetizes all who come in contact with it. It does for man what a magnet does to the steel blade of a boy's knife. As we approach the cross, some-

thing is communicated to us: its energies run over into us, so that we become filled with the fullness of Christ. As Jesus lived, we live. The thoughts he entertained we think; the purposes that were emotive and dynamic in his ministry become operative in us; and the ideals he cherished and expressed become our aim and passion. His outlook and perspective determine and inspire our vision. His benignant and beneficent spirit moves over us and we, in our several places and occupations, become lesser magnets which are not unlike himself.

It is said of Thackeray that once he was walking out the Dean Road to West Edinburgh, when a wooden crane of a quarry stood out on the horizon, and appeared in the dim light of the evening as a cross. Turning to his companions he said, "There is Calvary." A season of silence followed, when the writer began to talk of things divine, and gently led his friends to the contemplation of God. Calvary transfixed him—magnetized him.

So the cross gives us new motives and ideals, new aspirations and occupations. It unlocks the purses of the rich, and they

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minister graciously and generously to the poor. It magnetizes the strong, and they go forth into desert places to nurse the sick and dying. It gives direction to intellect and heart, and the poetry and music of the world are saturated with strange and incredible consecration. It fills the pews of the churches and the little chapels of the world with the aroma of sacrifice. It magnetizes society with the galvanism of brotherhood, and the kingdom of God is ushered in with all its mysterious optimism and beneficence.

Some of us are not enjoying life because no great motives control us. Life is insipid because our ideals and aims are unworthily small. We live; but do not move to the rhythm of any great motif. We are like the youth at the piano, who has been given a new sheet of music, which he finds uninteresting and dull. Nothing in it appeals to him or arouses his enthusiasm. Possibly the teacher failed to show him, or else could not do so, its beauty and symbolism. The composition, in consequence, is but a jumble of notes, incoherently strung together, and has no

musical value to the lad. It is not music at all, until an older and wiser head gets down by the side of the youth and by degrees brings out motif and theme. When the dream of the composer is expressed, the jargon of sound is converted into music. As the composition becomes intelligible, the fingers begin to move, the heart wakes, and the music has begun.

The cross of Jesus exercises this magic on the soul. In it and in him we get the motif of things. In him we catch the meaning of this motley existence of which we are part and parcel. We see what are wrought and intended. We get the purpose of God and by degrees see the beauty of the composer's intent. From that hour on, life gains inspiration and scope. Then we begin to live.

Such is the marvelous power of the cross. "It," said Henry Drummond in his last hours, "transcends all." Nothing surpasses it, save Jesus only. We can talk about it; theorize about it; but there it is on Golgotha hill—incomparable in its solitude and sympathy—drawing humanity to righteousness, life, God.

**JESUS CHRIST'S ENRICHMENT OF
LIFE**

CHAPTER XIV

JESUS CHRIST'S ENRICHMENT OF LIFE

TWENTY centuries ago it was said of Jesus that a multitude sought to touch him. Sufficient time, therefore, has passed to give the world opportunity to discredit him; of which, however, there is no danger. He is still the Incomparable One and the multitude is thronging him yet. He is the one Person humanity cannot let alone nor forget. Virtue goes out of him. He has the secret of life and is its fulfillment. He is humanity's hope, inspiration, and goal.

We will be drawn nearer to him in devotion and service, in life and scholarship, by observing some of the things he has done for us and the world. They are many and would fill volumes. There is scarcely a single point in our ramified life which he has not touched. The truth is, civilization is a commentary on Jesus Christ, so that it is quite difficult to ascer-

tain what elements in his ministry should be emphasized most. Our perplexity is like to that of a man who has been ushered into a vast lapidary's room where he is invited to select three or four precious stones for himself, and every one is so brilliant and precious that choice is next to impossible. Yet as we look at Jesus Christ and the crowd to which he ministered, listen to his teaching and note his influence, three great ideas gain prominence. In the horizon of thought they stand out in picturesque beauty, like the rocky cliffs of Maine on the coast line of the Atlantic.

Here is one of them: Jesus Christ has a most remarkable way of making men and women feel at home in the world.

That is affirming a great deal; for it is a common experience of thinking people to be overwhelmed by the magnitude and apparent enmity of the universe. I wonder sometimes what were the emotions of primitive man, when he was driven and lashed and tossed by the elements; when he heard the thunder roll and saw the lightning flash, felt the earthquake, and witnessed great volcanoes disgorge volumes

of smoke, vapor, and fire. Just what were his feelings as he looked into the abysmal deeps of space, at the stars, and without warning saw a comet swing into view and out of it, or the moon go into eclipse, or a meteor flash and sweep across the horizon and disappear in the void? Those feelings we can only partly surmise; but they were not unlike our own under similar circumstances. Humanity changes little. The primal emotions of the heart and its elemental passions are the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

When we ponder the world, compare ourselves with its gigantic forces and tragedies, we are deeply moved with wonder. Whence are these infinite spaces and whither do they extend? When will the spring of things have run down? Will this grandiose display of power be lost in the abysm of oblivion? Will there be a terrible collapse of these vast areas? Perhaps a fatal blow will be struck some day, when the earth in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, will be no more than a heap of wreck and ruin, a flaming star gradually consuming its own fuel, and then lost forever!

Such have been the queries and sentiments of man in all ages. You have entertained them; so have I. In common with men and women of every clime and creed, we have felt their significance. The world is ever tremulous with the thought of them and never ceases its questioning. It was so when Jesus came. Men and women were asking, "O God, if thou art there; if thou art behind the veil; if thou art present in life's ceaseless movement—make thyself known. Declare thy purpose and calm our hearts." To men and women thus concerned, Jesus came; and the significant thing about his life is, that they crowded around him like bees about a rosebush. He had a secret. It lit up his countenance and illumined his thought. Men came in contact with him and saw it at a glance. They could not avoid it, get over it, or away from it. There it was, bright as light, subtile as beauty, pervasive as air. He had the secret of the world.

Jesus understood the crowd and knew what to do. With a single wave of his hand, with a single movement of his lips,

he inspired confidence, stimulated homely feeling, and encouraged repose. Just when he first said it and where, I do not know; but it may have been in the fields where the flowers were blooming and the birds were singing, and the sky was bright and cloudless, that he disclosed his secret. But this is what Jesus said, as he thought of the mystery of life, pondered its gigantic forces, and felt the compulsion of its laws: "My children, when these thoughts arise, say, 'Father.' "

Father! We have spoken that word a myriad times. We have spoken it in the calm of the evening; in the breezy morning; in the gala day of fortune; in the night of adversity; but though we have spoken it so often, let us pronounce it again. It brings with it thrills of delight: it is the secret of Jesus and gives us all the feeling of Home. "Taught by Christ," says Dr. Martineau, "we glance at the visible creation, once so awful, so full of forces rushing we know not whither, and involving us in their indomitable speed—and it becomes the mansion of God's house, peaceful as a father's abode; the

sun that warms us in our domestic hearth; and the blue canopy that roofs us in with unspeakable protection.”

The universe is nothing less than a palatial abiding place for God, and its myriad hearth fires, around which you and I congregate, are his temples, in which he meets us all. This is God’s world. He is at the heart of it, and, therefore, we are safe.

In every age this message has inspired confidence and courage. It has changed the tone and temperature of the soul. I remember reading somewhere that the great Dr. Channing had his heart so imbued with this thought of God’s fatherhood that he welcomed the fiercest storms, liked to be in a ship when it rocked, because it gave him a new and vivid sensation of God’s solicitude and care. Clearly, also, do I remember a lad of seven who as yet had no one to abuse his mind by suggesting danger in the night; how one night I watched him leave the house to meet his father up the road. There was not a trace of fear—father was at the end of his little journey. But when he returned some

one inquired whether he had been afraid, and I can yet see the look of surprise on his face. But that suspicious question broke the spell. Like suspicions and superstitions have distracted and disturbed the world. Jesus knew that to be so, and, therefore, taught men to believe that the Father is in the dark, as in the light; in the storm, in the rainbow, the earthquake, and the still small voice of calm. The air we breathe is deific, and nature's self is invested with benevolence.

I doubt not but this power of Jesus to bring the crowd under the spell of home-like feeling in the world, has had much to do with the progress of the world in the study and mastery of nature. Achievements in science and mechanics owe their origin, not to the force of circumstance, but to the *force of confidence*. Faith, not necessity, is the mother of invention. The gigantic studies in astronomy, chemistry, mechanics, medicine, and music owe their first inspiration to the Man of Galilee, who looked into the face of nature and saw behind its picturesque beauty the pulsating image of the Father. He be-

lieved that creation was God's epic, and that it pleased the Father to have his children read his thoughts after him.

Recall for a moment the reappearance of Halley's comet. How it stimulated our faith in God's world! You remember that before Halley's time men were very much perplexed by the apparently erratic performances of comets. They were looked upon as gigantic anarchists in an otherwise orderly universe. But Sir Edmund Halley wrestled with the problem and discovered that every one of them was governed by law and that their movements, course, and speed could be calculated. In referring to a comet that appeared in 1682 he said it would return in seventy-six years. It was seen in 1758, sixteen years after his death. It was seen again in 1835; and yet again in 1911.

How we welcomed it, and rejoiced at its coming! Though it was 3,400,000,000 miles from the earth, and 10,000,000 miles in length, and had traveled trillions of miles, and was so gigantic that it defied imagination, we welcomed it, because the Father whom Jesus declared as his life's

secret, ordered and controlled it. When we looked at it in the silent night and were filled with astonishment and adoration, we bowed our heads and said:

God's in his heaven;
All's well with the world.

So, in the second place, Jesus Christ had a most fascinating and conclusive way of revealing to humanity the divinity of its nature. He got men and women to see what they never saw before with such clearness and certainty, that they were made in the similitude of the great Spirit who orders and controls the world. He made people feel at home in the *world of space*, and he also gave them the same feeling in the *life of the spirit*.

That is even a greater achievement than the former. It is an achievement that lays hold of the roots of our being in such a way that, small and apparently insignificant that we are, we gain confidence, prowess, and power over the elements, the rolling seas, storm, and flood. Jesus Christ tells us we are the sons of God, and instinctively man responds to his words,

stands erect, and proves it. Christ gives us a hint as to what we are, and the next moment the varied magnificence of our nature asserts its power and issues forth to conquer.

There is a story told of a lad who, in troublous times, had been given in charge of a humble peasant for safe keeping. As he was heir to a great throne in Europe, the responsibility of the peasant was not a matter to be accepted lightly.

One day it was necessary to chide the boy for wrongdoing; and his adopted sire said: "My boy, you are the son of a king; and some day you will be a great monarch. Live like a king's son." The youth's nature responded to the call and challenge of the peasant. His royal nature answered with royal conduct. An appeal to his inherent kingliness prompted him to live like a prince.

Such was the power of Jesus Christ. He informed the people that he met of their *divinity*. He said, "Ye are the sons of God," and they in many instances responded by living in kingly fashion. We marvel how he does it, but cannot doubt

the result. Here is a woman, lost to love and purity, because the flesh is her ruling passion. He neither chides nor condemns. Though he saw the ruin and tragedy of her evil ways, the somber wretchedness of her lot, he appealed to the divine spark in the soul. By a chance word or glance he assured her that all was not lost. The soul is still burning, and he will fan it into a flame. He did. Before she could know what had happened, the divinity of her nature was seized and gripped and converted into a passion for righteousness.

But this is but an incident taken out of an encyclopedia of similar experiences. The world is under the spell and magic of this Man. We are only beginning to see the tremendous influence of his personality. "Jesus," said Dr. Brierly, "told people to believe in the great forces of their life. To some of them it was like telling them to fly." But he was firm. He stood by his text. He held to his pronouncement; and so it happened that the next generation of life, and every succeeding one, has figured more prominently in the renewal and regeneration of

the world. So his influence continues to the present. To-morrow or the next day, we will be awed and startled like the men and women on the Day of Pentecost. The royal blood of man will win at last, and the kingdom of kingly men and queenly women will be ushered in for all time.

Jesus Christ has enriched life by bringing immortality to light. He lifts the veil of the present and the hereafter. With marvelous astuteness, clearness, precision, and enthusiasm, he showed the multitude that life was an unbroken and undiminished stream that swells in volume and momentum in its course until it passes into the eternal ocean. His entire ministry is pervaded with the thought of immortality, and his words are saturated with its spirit. So prominent was this in Christ that man felt the eternal in himself. For him the Messianic Age had come, and with it the ascendancy of life over death.

So we look back at the crowd again and inquire why they throng him so, break into his solitude, and disturb his peace. They are there for the same reason we are at his altar. He knows the secrets

of the *hereafter* as well as of the present, and in both we are interested. We have all wondered and still wonder at the issue of things. We have stood with bowed head in the presence of sickness and death, and are familiar with the emotions that filled Tennyson's heart when it bled for his friend:

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, He knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die,
And thou hast made him: Thou art just.

That feeling is stronger now than ever. The more we achieve, the larger spheres we fill, the more our hearts thirst for immortality. Show a man this vast world, what is to be seen, felt and learned; reveal to him the fact that he is able to take in this vast cosmos, trace its laws and utilize its forces, and the thought of extinction is intolerable! Extinction is the worst barbarism of all! To be lifted so high and dropped so low; to see so much and become so little at the end; to see God and end in dust: No! No! that is not the verdict of the soul! That anguish

has gone from us forever, since Jesus lived. At every gathering of people for public worship we can sing and shout, "Sursam Corda"—"Lift up your hearts! Lift up your hearts!" There is nothing to fear and all to hope and gain.

Therefore we can join the Saviour in the song he inspired in the immortal Browning:

Grow old along with me!

The best is yet to be;

The last of life, for which the first was made.

Our times are in His hands

Who saith, "A whole I planned;

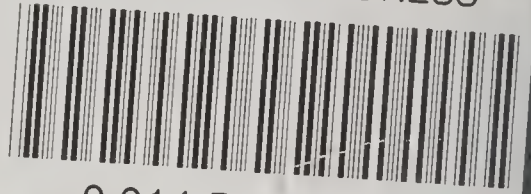
Youth shows but half: trust God; see all, nor
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